Jackals

BRONZE AGE FANTASY ROLEPLAYING

JOHN-MATTHEW DEFOGGI

OSPREY GAMES

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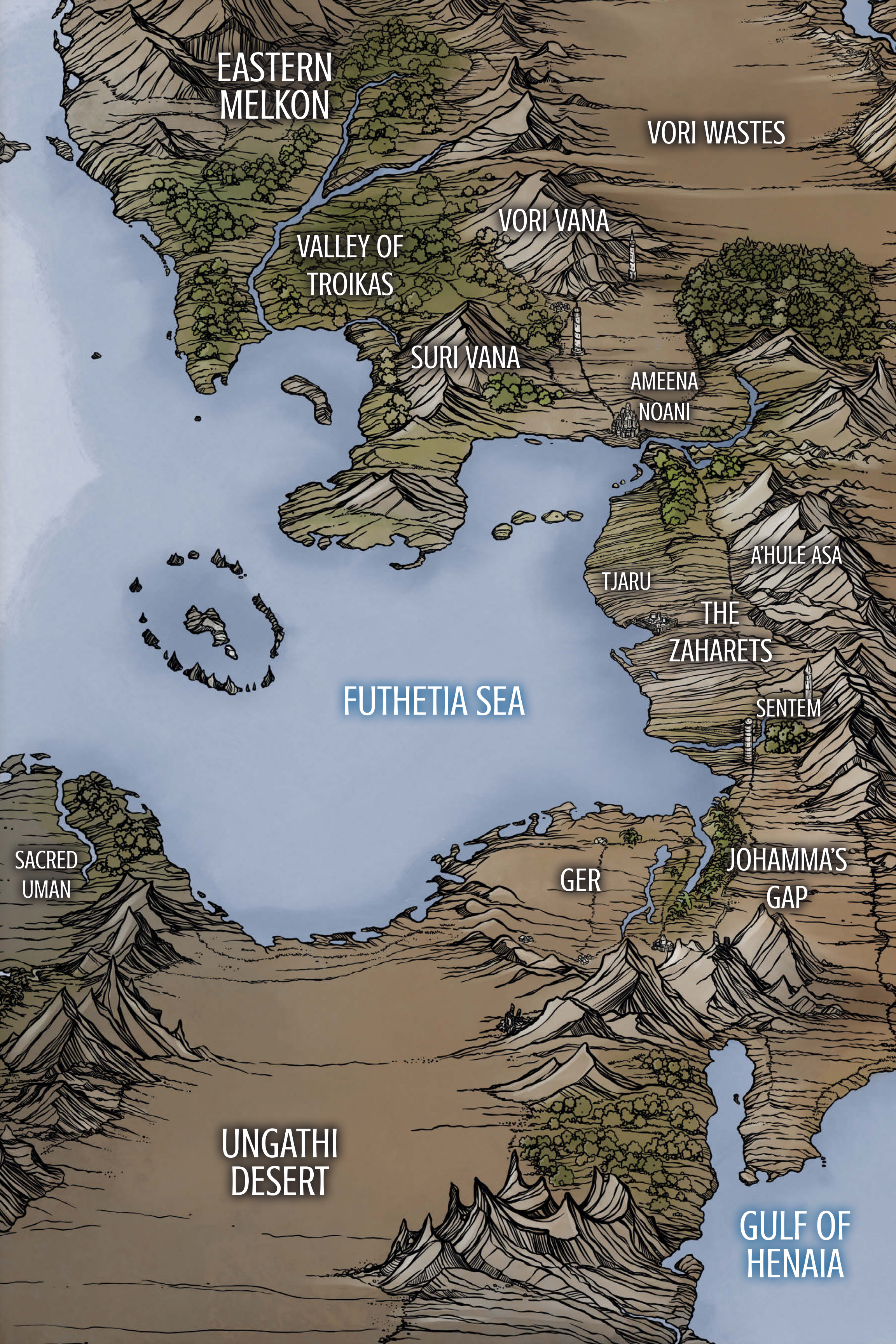
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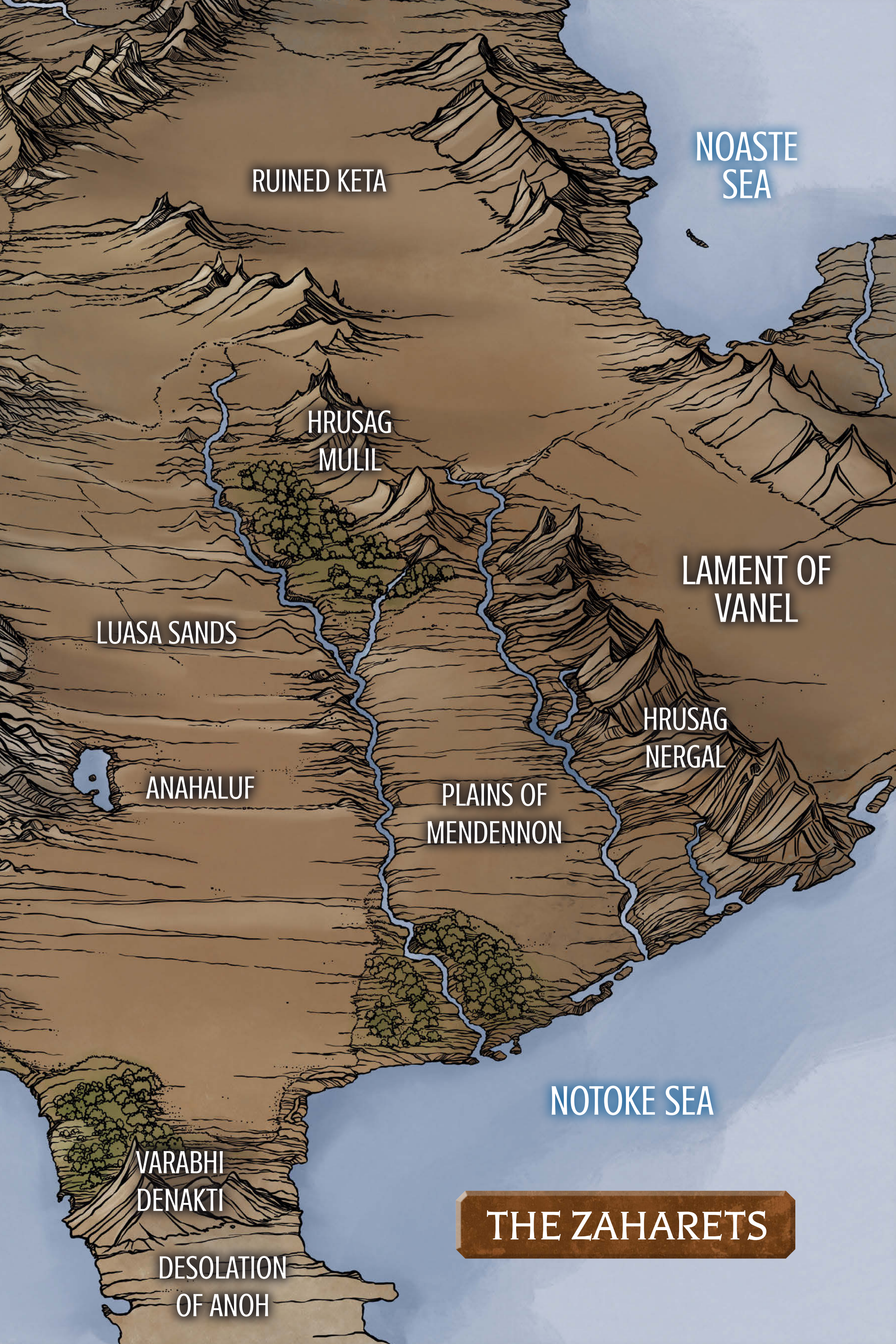
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Gone is the gate and gone are the walls
Their foundations lie below
The dry and arid desert sand --
Once an empire long ago.
Cast down by foes both base and weak,
Children made of bronze.
Time will bring their trials to naught
And all will be made pawns
Of the Iron Crown that will arise.
To once again be placed
Upon a brow so dread and fair;
Our fate shall be erased.
Rebuild the gate, rebuild the walls
Oh, chosen of the east.
Arise and claim the onyx throne.
The Mou'alin wish to feast.

~Prophecy of Mou'alin, Kinesh of Mikro, Year of Fallen Seeds~

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Zara skirted the edges of the large room, attempting to keep to the shadows. She watched in horror as her companions, Nikos, Shumma, and Biska, charged the ancient Etemma. The creature's spirit stood tall and proud over the golden shell that housed its corpse. Its surety in its ability to dominate the conflict was absolute. Nikos stood fast, the proud Melkoni warrior sheathed in the bronze plate of his culture, trusting in it and his shield to protect him from the worst the horror of the ancient world would do to him. He pointed his bronze-tipped spear at the creature, ready to react as soon as he saw an opening.

Biska was bleeding from multiple wounds, yet he continued to fight. Like Zara, he was Trauj, and their hatred of all that served the serpent's banner was total. Even though his twin swords dipped towards the ground, Zara knew Biska would expend all his life's blood to bring an end to this Etemma.

Shumma, the Luathi, struck out again with her heavy two-handed spear, attempting through force of will and strength of arms to banish the spirit. Zara could see the way Shumma's muscles rippled and writhed under her skin, evidence of the Corruption she now bore. But still, the Luathi fought with them, despite it.

Zara looked around, scanning the room for anything that might be more effective than her horse bow against the Etemma. Stacked against the wall were spears, which the spirit's servants had stolen from the caravans they raided. Some of the weapons were Melkoni spears, the bronze heads honed to a razor-sharp edge. She turned, planning to snatch one up and hurl it from where she stood, to keep her distance from the spirit's chilling aura.

Becca, the Loremaster, called for a Ranged Combat test as Trisha described her character, Zara, hurling the newly claimed spear.

Welcome to the Zaharets, Jackals. The Hasheers of Ameena Noani say 'Zaharets' means 'Land of Risings'. And at this moment, no name is more fitting. It has been three generations since the Uprising, since my ancestors stood as one and threw off the chains of the Kingdom of Ignorance. Three generations since we rose up, took up arms, and pushed the damned Takan back into the wastes and the mountains.

The need for your kind has never been greater. The Jackal star is high in the heavens and the powers of the Luathi need old ruins scoured, new forts claimed, and the blood of Takan poured out on the sands.

Strap on your breastplate, sharpen your bronze, and help me push back the Chaos that threatens to cast down the works of our hands.

– Nawsi Namar, of Orsem Yahan, speaking to a group of Melkoni Jackals before sending them to their deaths in the depths of the Ligna Hualla.

WELCOME TO *JACKALS*

Welcome to *Jackals*, a roleplaying game set in the Ancient Near East-inspired fantasy setting of Kalypsis. *Jackals* and Kalypsis draw their inspiration from our own history, as well as the epic poems and books of old. The *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Iliad*, the *Baal Cycle*, and the *Old Testament* are the wells we went to when designing the world and the system. Here you will find a Bronze Age world struggling to raise itself out of a near global collapse at the end of an age. One hundred and fifty years ago, the great kingdom of Barak Barad, ruled by the monstrous beastfolk known as the Takan, fell to a slave rebellion that shattered its hold on the region known as the Zaharets, or the Land of Risings. The Luathi, those slaves who rebelled, took the coastal area as their own. This enabled the human cultures to re-establish communication, trade, and dominion in the region. Yet the Takan did not give up their claim to the Land of Risings. The flame of civilisation, which humanity is desperately trying to rekindle, draws the notice of other, older, darker forces.

In a game of *Jackals*, one of you plays the Loremaster. It is the Loremaster's job to bring the Land of Risings alive. The Loremaster creates and runs the adventures, manages the non-player characters (NPCs), and challenges the players' characters (PCs). The rest of the group plays Jackals, those characters who are fighting to rediscover the truth about the past. They fight to keep the forces of Chaos from invading the Zaharets and ending the burgeoning light of civilisation. In this book, you will find the setting of the Zaharets and the four human cultures that populate it, as well as a d100 system that provides the rules for playing in this historically adjacent world.

Finally, at the end of this book, you will find three adventures to get you started gaming along the War Road, the name given to the coastal plains of the Zaharets. We hope you enjoy digging into the mystery of Kalypsis, fighting Takan along the war road, and exploring the ruins of the civilisations of the Zaharets.

THE GAME

In *Jackals*, you take on the role of Jackals – those who leave the safety of their communities and explore the wilds of the world – the scavengers of the dead ruins of lost times. As a Jackal, your character has the potential to become a hero of legend, like Gilgamesh, Achilles, or Samson. However, Jackals do not start on par with these figures. They must earn their legendary status and skill by testing themselves against the world. Those starting out as Jackals are not pushovers, though. They have mettle beyond the average members of their culture, and they begin their journey blessed by fate.

The Jackals remain one of the primary reasons for the continued existence of human cultures in the Zaharets. They exterminate the Takan tribes, cleanse old ruins of the Dead, and recover lost lore from the mansions of the old peoples. When something threatens a town, the townfolk love the Jackals. When the threat has passed, they often force the Jackals to move on, too.

Finding their place within the fabric of the society they protect is often the goal of a group of Jackals. They need the protection and amenities civilisation provides, even though they spend much of their time away from it.

There are many reasons why one would become a Jackal, from the desire for adventure to the need to escape one's past. The question you must answer is: what set your character on this dangerous and outcast path?

Four human cultures dominate the Zaharets, each exploring and settling the region for their own purposes. The Luathi rule two city-states at opposite ends of the War Road: Ameena Noani and Sentem. They begin to turn their attention outward toward the Zaharets, as their leaders seek to claim more of the land for themselves. To the north, the city-states of the Melkoni establish a colony on the fringes of the Zaharets, while to the south, the Kingdom of Ger once again sends traders along the War Road. To the east, in the great Luasa Desert, the clans of the Trauj trade with Luathi merchants for bronze and information. Members of these cultures now seek their destiny in the Zaharets, and your characters are among them.

THE LUATHI

The tribes of the Luathi won their independence from Barak Barad and established footholds on the northern and southern ends of the War Road. The city-states of Ameena Noani and Sentem provide anchors for the Luathi culture, which has many small towns scattered up and down the coast. The Luathi seek to rediscover who they are and spread the light of Alwain. Some also seek to consolidate power over the War Road and raise a kingdom to rival any within the Zaharets.

THE GERWA

The Jewel of the South, the Kingdom of Ger, has existed for thousands of years. Their Kiani (divine line of rulers) claim a lineage that extends into the mythic past. They just emerged from a period of isolation and civil war. Although they are currently at war with tribes to the west of their borders, Gerwa traders and recruiters trade in the Luathi settlements along the War Road, searching for partners and information.

THE MELKONI

Far to the west lie the Melkoni city-states. They are remote and removed from the Land of Risings. However, they established the colony of Kroryla, to secure their interest in a Takan-free Zaharets. Recently Kroryla has seen an influx of new settlers and refugees who speak of a great war in the west.

THE TRAUJ

The clans of the Trauj dwell on the eastern edge of the Zaharets, in the Luasa Desert. These horsemen aided the Luathi in their rebellion and now fiercely hunt the Takan. The Trauj view all peoples who are not Trauj as weak and soft. Outsiders question why anyone would choose to live in the Luasa, but the Trauj excel in that harsh environment. Recently, those along the War Road have seen Trauj outside the desert, joining Jackal packs.

These great powers now awaken in the Zaharets.

WHAT IS KALYPSIS?

Kalypsis is the world that lies under the dome of the firmament and between the Gates of Dawn and Dusk. The great watery serpent, Yaam, encircles the land. In the firmament hang the sun and the stars, as well as the three Sisters of the Moons: Gai, the Green Lady; Kauma, the Red Lady; and Oura, the Silver Lady. The three sisters travel the firmament in a complex and stately dance, and many who watch them see signs and portents in their movements. They weave around the Great River, a luminous indigo band that makes its way through the night sky, as well. Three great stars help to guide the people of Kalypsis: Chium, the north star; Mazar, the south star; and the newly emerged Jackal star, a bright star that has arisen in the east.

Most cultures of the world acknowledge that below the earth lies the underworld, although each culture has a wildly different interpretation of that underworld. For example, the Luathi – those who fought for their freedom from the Takan – refer to it as the Silent Lands, a grey world where Alwain rewards the spirits of those who followed the Law in life; whereas the Ger speak of Anu's halls, where the Eight judge each soul that enters through death's door.

The cyclical struggle between Law and Chaos has left its mark on the world's history. Many forces in the world work to ensure one side emerges dominant. The world is emerging from an epoch where Chaos has reigned. Its hold on the world seems to be broken for the time being, but it is up to the heroes to ensure the world does not slide back into the darkness that enveloped it for so long.

Now is the time of Humanity. The human cultures of the world are carving out a new place for themselves, building upon the ruins of previous cultures. Whether they will stand on the shoulders of giants just to fall farther is unknown.

In this book, the focus is on one region of the world – a crossroads known as the Zaharets.

WHAT IS THE ZAHARETS?

The Zaharets is a land of layers – crossroads where three large landmasses meet. It was named so long ago that no one remembers the strange people who named it. It has been the site of trade and war over the millennia, and the coastal stretch is called the War Road because of how many battles were fought along it. Many cultures have claimed dominion over this area and have fallen into dust. Its unknown histories continue to steer the course of those who seek to rule the Land of Risings, like the Sars of Ameena Noani and Sentem – or yourself. The Zaharets once held many older civilisations, which left their mark on the land. Takan ruins dot the landscape, a constant reminder of the Kingdom of Ignorance and the fragility of the Law of Alwain. Older ruins speak of greater works of far greater civilisations, which have since vanished into the mists of time. Scars abound, reminders of the wars between ruined Keta in the north and Ger in the south. Inhuman mansions lie sealed beneath the mountains, awaiting those who would seek out the children of the moons.

LANGUAGES OF THE ZAHARETS

There are many languages spoken in the Zaharets, and many more no tongue has spoken for centuries. The following are the most common:

- **The Howls**. This is the trade tongue of the Zaharets, a pidgin of common Luathii and Gerwan phrases for use in the wilderness by traders, mercenaries, and, of course, Jackals. This serves as a lingua franca for the lands of the Zaharets.
- **Gerwan**. The language of the Gerwa. While possessing a similar grammatical structure to Luathi, all but a few of the words are unique to Gerwan.
- **Hannic**. The language of the Hann. Common in Hasheer rites.
- **Hulathii**. The language of the Hulathi. Shares much in common with Hannic. Common in Alwainic rites.
- **Luathii**. The common tongue and language of the Luathi culture.
- **Melkonon**. The language of the Melkoni. Shares a common root with Luathii, although only the scribes notice it.
- **Mouadran**. The language of the fallen empire of Barak Barad. Used by Takan. Common in Mouathenic rites.
- **Trahan**. The language of the Trauj. Shares much in common with Hulathii.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Jackals is set in a world rich with cultures and many langauges, so when you are first delving in, you might occasionally find yourself lost in its terms: what do the titles Sar and Nawsi mean? Who are the Six and the Eight? What does Mettle mean? The Glossary on page 262 provides a quick reference for both cultural and game terms, so remember to use it!

CHAPTER 2
CULTURAL OVERVIEWS

Jackals are rooted in the cultures from which they hail, despite travelling the Zaharets in isolated packs. This chapter covers the cultures of humanity in the Zaharets, each of which descended from the great tribes that migrated into this region in time immemorial. Four of these cultures (the Luathi, the Gerwa, the Melkoni, and the Trauj) are described here, as they are the most prevalent in the region. Your first – and most important – choice is to decide from which the culture your Jackal hails, as that affects everything from their traits to their fighting styles and rites.

LUATHI, CHILDREN OF BRONZE

And Shumma stood before the 12 elders and the people in the Pit of Slaves, hidden from the eyes of the beasts.

"Alwain has seen your labour and heard your cries. This kingdom of ignorance, which the beasts of the east have built shall crumble."

Then Resh, the elder of the tribe that bears his name to this day, spoke:

"Who is this Alwain? He is unknown to us. Why should we trust in him or his power over the beasts?"

Then Shumma said to the people in the Pit of Slaves, hidden from the eyes of the beasts:

"Oh, Children of Bronze. Too long have you laboured in darkness that you forget the light. You serve the beasts and the gods of the beasts because you believe them to be your masters. Too long have you sat in darkness and called it home. Darkness is not your home, nor the beast your master. You were given to the Rising Lands and the Rising Lands were given to you. As a parent grants inheritance to a favoured child, so was this land granted unto you by Alwain. Darkness was never meant to be your home; your home was the Zaharets and your god Alwain."

And many among the people resisted this, saying:

"Who is Shumma to speak so to us? Is she not the child of Ashirat? Did she not flee when the lash fell upon her mother's tribe? She will bring the lash down on our backs. The masters and their gods will see us here in the pit, and they will strike us with a lash made of scorpion's tails. They will punish us for listening to her." Shumma cried out against these protests, and the tongues of the malcontents dried up within their mouths. Light erupted around her, and it seemed to all as though the sun had risen in the Pit of Slaves.

"Once, you were masters of this land, under the stewardship of Alwain. All the Rising Lands from the sea to the mountains, from Keta to Gerwa, belonged to your forebears. You

inherited this land from the silvered stewards, who inherited it from Alwain during their great war with the east. Standing in the light of Alwain, on the backs of the stewards, your ancestors rose to the heights of glory. They strove with the men of silver and the children of the moons against the blood of Mouadah. This was the great undertaking that earned the wrath of the beast. For their part in the breaking of the Iron Gate, you, their children, are being punished.

For a time, our forebears knew peace. But time is the great enemy of our hearts and memories. Our ancestors forsook the light of Alwain for the whispers of wrath. Resolve faltered, and that wrathful worship rang out like a call – a call answered by the beasts. They razed the Grand Kingdoms and monuments to the Lord of the Morning. They gained the friendship of those who would open the gates to them. The beasts came and destroyed and enslaved. Darkness swallowed the Rising Lands and raised a Kingdom of Ignorance."

All was quiet in the Pit of Slaves, for all heard a power in the voice of Shumma and saw a light in the face of Shumma that was not her own. Even those few with malice in their hearts waited to hear what Shumma would say. Then Shumma spoke again:

"For generations, darkness has ruled the people of bronze. The night has reigned in our hearts and over our bodies. It has sought to master us. But our Lord raised me up and called me and sent me here to raise a light in your hearts. He has multiplied you here, in the darkness, and caused you to grow strong of body. Now, it is time for us to grow strong of spirit. I will teach you of Alwain, of his words, of our place in the Rising Lands, and of his power. By his might, we will be free."

And the people and the 12 elders of the tribes praised Alwain and his prophetess Shumma. They praised Alwain's name and sought his face and praised the name of Shumma the prophetess of Alwain.

Shumma went among the people and taught them of Alwain. She raised up the first of the Kahars, those from among the tribes who would hear the voice of Alwain and take his light with them.

A great earthquake heralded the arrival of the word of Alwain among the people, and the beasts trembled and marvelled in terror.

A Passage from the Book of Freedoms

OVERVIEW

The Children of Bronze are the current human inhabitants of the Zaharets and are the most prevalent of the cultures there. For 500 years, the bestial Takan brutally enslaved them. The Takan used the Luathi as slave stock, tearing their history and identity from them. It was only when Shumma, the great prophetess of Alwain, led her Uprising against the Takan that the Luathi rediscovered who they were and where they came from. Shumma returned to them their history, their faith, and their freedom. She then led three of the tribes out of the Zaharets, headed for a land only she knew existed. Those who remained are the Luathi of the War Road, the tribes of Amar, Himeel, Omri, and Resh. Claiming their freedom from the Takan only three generations past, these Luathi still hold a tenuous grasp on the Zaharets. The towns of Ameena Noani and Sentem are the primary bastions of Luathi culture, situated at opposite ends of the War Road.

VIRTUES

The three virtues of Luathi culture are freedom (*Fires of Freedom*), community (*Bonds of Family*), and knowledge (*Seeker of Knowledge*). The desire for independence still burns brightly in the hearts of all Luathi; scars from the Takan's yoke are still fresh on the souls of the people. The Takan sought to break the Luathi and erase their history and identity. During their captivity, the Luathi clung to each other. Family and tribe were their only identity for hundreds of years. Although the Luathi overthrew their inhuman masters, they still cling tightly to this familial identity. Finally, emerging from centuries of ignorance, the Luathi crave knowledge. They seek to recover what they lost, delve into their history and the history of the Zaharets, and find the power to protect their new identity and way of life. This road can lead down dark paths, and you must constantly be on guard against Corruption.

TYPICAL JACKALS

The War Road Wanderer

These Luathi become Jackals when the walls of their cities grow too tall, the streets too close together. They feel the call of the War Road and set out to find their fortune. Sheep herders, caravan guards, and even redsmiths' children take up spear and sling and set out to claim a piece of the War Road for themselves.

The Seeker of Knowledge

The Zaharets is a land of layers, and for some Luathi, the draw to uncover the past is too great to ignore. Hasheers and their guards, or perhaps aspiring scholars, seek out the dark places of the Zaharets to delve into the old ruins. Often, these ill-fated expeditions end in death and Corruption, but enough succeed at bringing lore back to the Scriptorium to inspire others to make fresh attempts.

The Called

Alwain speaks to all those with ears to hear; and often, those who hear take to the road. Alwain moves in strange ways, and frequently sends the faithful out to oppose those who would raise up the standard of Chaos in the world. The forces of darkness constantly hunt the Called as they undertake their mission to spread the light and truth of Alwain throughout the world.

FAITH: ALWAINISM

Alwainism is the primary faith of the Luathi. It is the worship of the creator of the world, Alwain, the Lord of Law. Alwain caused all of creation to be, and is the Lord of all that resides within it. He revealed himself many times throughout the history of the world, the last time being through the words of the prophet Shumma during the Uprising. Shumma, before she took three of the Luathi tribes and left for the south, composed the *Shalapher: the Three Books*. The Books of the *Shalapher* are Beginnings, Freedoms, and Rites. Each Book chronicles a different part of the revelation of Alwain to the Luathi. Beginnings covers the creation of the world, the fall of the Rathic, the creation of humanity, and their journey to the Zaharets. Freedoms is the recording of Shumma's call and the Uprising. Finally, Rites is the Book that contains the Laws of Alwain.

In the Zaharets, the Luathi carry out Alwainic worship at the Temples of Alwain or on the public altars a community might raise to Him. The primary temple to Alwain is in Ameena Noani. However, the Kahars of Sentem discovered an old Hulathi ruin in the Plains of Aeco and dedicated it to the Morning Lord. Kahar Nabal began restoration of the temple, which caused a scandal among the Kahars in Ameena Noani.

While Alwainism calls all Luathi to worship Alwain, many choose to worship the gods of the Gerwa, Melkoni, and others. The Book of Rites states these other gods are not for the Luathi people, as Alwain set them in place over the other nations of the world.

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

Kahar, The Servants of Alwain

Alwain is the creator of Kalypsis and the initiator of Law. The Luathi are called to worship and obey Him. Those who act as the spiritual shepherds of the Luathi are known as Kahar Alwaias – the servants of Alwain. This title covers the hereditary priests of the temples and the blessed fighters of Alwain, as well as the navi, or prophets. Kahar understand that it is only through their devotion to Alwain and obedience to His tenets, as laid out by Shumma, that they are granted the ability to perform His rites. These rites tend to focus on the primary characteristics and mediums of Alwain – purity, light, and water.

Hasheers of Ameena Noani

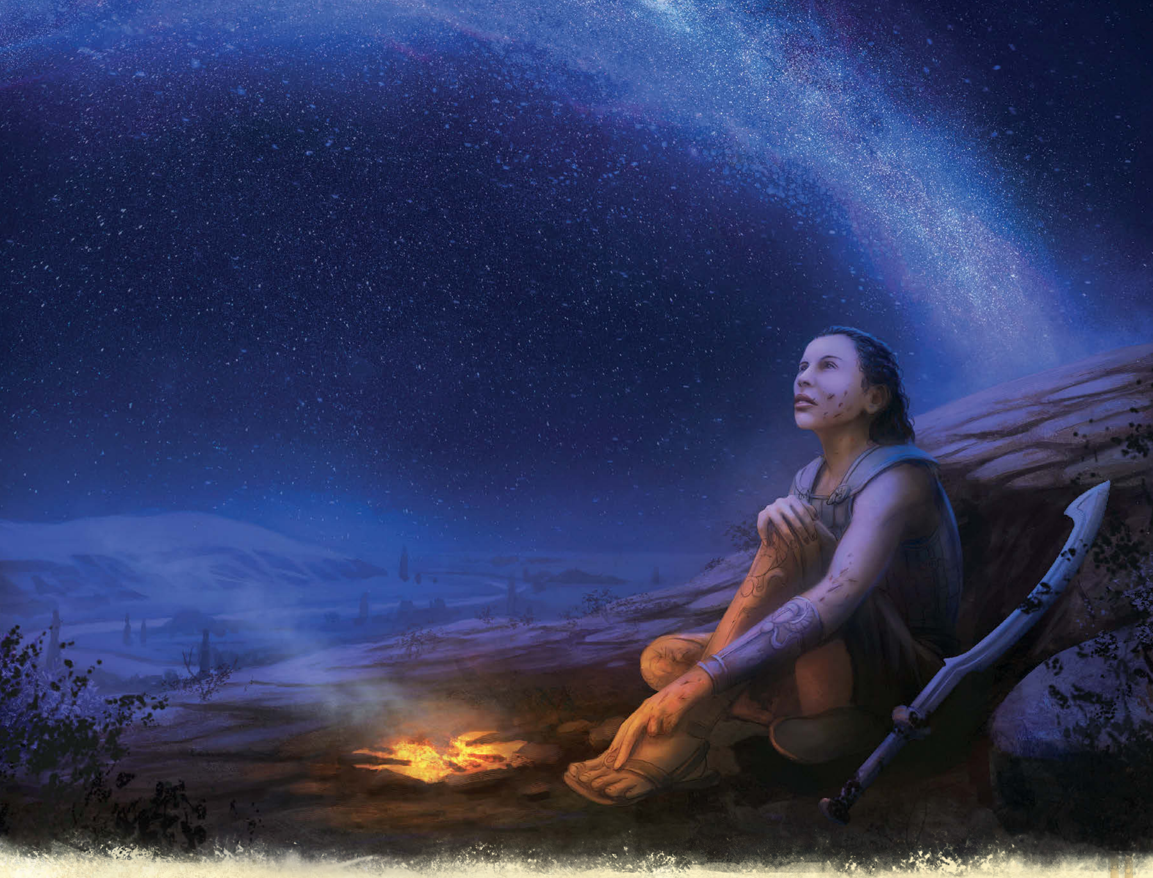
A century ago, a Sar of Ameena Noani organised the Hasheers. Their purpose is to gather and safeguard knowledge, as the Luathi still feel the sting of past ignorance the Takan imposed upon them. What started off as a modest endeavour by three scholars has become a mighty Scriptorium where those who crave knowledge may come to learn. While sifting through the past, the Hasheers have uncovered fragments of the spell-songs of the Hann and the Hulathi writs of power. Both draw on the underlying Laws of creation that Alwain put into place. Although they do not have the breadth of spirit to invoke or sing what they have discovered, through intense study and force of will they are able to produce lesser effects. For the most part, the Hasheers hide away the lore of the twisted path, focusing on rites which aid in knowledge, understanding of the natural world, and revelation.

APPEARANCE

Physically, the Luathi possess bronze skin and hair that ranges from honey to deep brown (never black). They traditionally keep their hair long, and the men grow thick beards. The average Luathi stands about three and a half cubits (5'6") tall. Their primary language is Luathii, with many loan words from Hulathii and the Takan tongue.

NAMES

Male: Abbir, Anzor, Barqan, Dabar, Deshi, Gashur, Girhekal, Hanesh, Hirrom, Kinesh, Namar, Sedeq, Taom, Zabul, Zamir.
Unisex: Hanni, Hanno, Shuma.
Female: Abishai, Aldeshi, Bannit, Beriti, Eldeshi, Girgishi, Hegnit, Kabidit, Namgidda, Phamea, Shamohit, Tennit, Tirisht, Toara, Yatunit.
Tribes: There are seven great tribes of the Luathi people: Amar, Geshrun, Hesson, Himeel, Meposepth, Omri, and Resh.



GERWA, THE PEOPLES OF THE SOUTH

Bet sat watching the others around the small fire. The two Luathi with their crude spears and bronzed sun emblems sat whispering to each other. "One god, how small of them," she thought as she drew the twin crescents of the Faces of the Moon in the edge of the fire's ashes. She thought the rote prayer: "Goddess turn your eye from me…" Bet found her eye drawn to the other Gerwa in this group of uhari. She had to resist the urge to spit and make the sign of warding. Usati was a Hekas, a sorcerer who stepped outside the gods' prescription. Yet, the desert sands make strange beds, as her mother always told her.

A month with these uhari, these Jackals, and Bet had learned much. Mostly about the Luathi's single god, Alwain. She snorted. One god… who could believe the whole creation was the purview of only a single deity? It was preposterous. Yet, sometimes it felt that was all Phamea wanted to speak about. Bet's skin crawled a bit as she contemplated the Jackal. How could anyone want to become an outcast from their families and cities, cut off from everything the gods had appointed for them? They were all as bad as Usati, deviants who walked their own paths with no regard for the order of heaven.

Bet sighed and leaned back. The Sky Wheel was high in the night sky, obscuring the light from the moons and bathing everything in its pale glow. That was different, she thought. She *could remember seeing it barely crest the northern sky in her youth, like a pale lapis sunset that resided along the wrong horizon. Here, far to the north, the band hung in the northern sky like a road of light. She was sure Phamea would have some nonsensical reason for it. Bet knew, as all Gerwa did, that the band was the stain of Aahote's blood along the bowl of the sky where he was rent during the Time of Night Without End. Closing her eyes, she mentally prepared the message she would send when they arrived in Ameena Noani.*

'To the most glorious Kiani Ta-kha'et, radiant daughter of Aahote, Shelter and Shield of the people and lands of Ger, Watcher of the Threshold by the Eight, I greet you, may the Six continually turn their face from you and towards the enemies of Ger.'

'I continue with the uhari who do the bidding of their masters in the space between cities. During one such journey, we encountered a foreign Ba that had slowly begun to influence the minds of the town of Mikro. The people, without the safety granted by the sovereign order, quickly fell beneath its sway. The Ba was resealed by the Luathi I travel with before I could speak to it. However, I left a marker that another of your servants will be able to swiftly find. This Ba is powerful, yet I could not determine to which realm it belongs. It has been held ensorcelled behind ancient wards similar to the ruins along the Hakmiri coast in Ger. A priest of Djhutemos should find it most willing to deal and should be able to handle both the wards and the Ba, should you seek power over your brother, the Kiani of Ameena Noani.'

'It is to that city we now travel. I suspect, due to my role within this pack, the Kiani of the city will be most pleased to entertain us. It has come to our attention that he seeks uhari to do work for him in the wastes to the north. Whatever they seek will no doubt bring great honour to those who find it, placing them in the Kiani of Ameena Noani's inner circle. Assuming, of course, Ger has no need of what lies hidden in the sands of the north.'

'All this and more I work towards, for the vision of the Eight.'

'Your servant in this world and the next, shield me from the sight of the Six.'

Bet continued to turn the letter over in her mind, refining it until she was satisfied. Tomorrow she would rework it into a cypher, and she would send it south with a certain Gerwa trader who was in Sentem awaiting the message. From there, Eight willing, it would be in the hands of the Kiani before the month ended.

A soft smile spread over Bet's face as Phamea once again began to speak of the light of Alwain.

OVERVIEW

To the south and west of the Zaharets lies the Kingdom of Ger. It is an ancient land, with a history that goes back some 5,000 years. The Kiani, a line of Priest-Kings who claim to be descendants of the gods of old, rule Ger. Nestled between the coast and an imposing mountain range, Ger occupies a fertile delta in the midst of an arid desert. Most Gerwa consider the rest of the cultures of the Zaharets ignorant, backwards, or simple compared to the richness and glory of the six cities of Ger.

Living in the shadows of their temples and the tombs of their gods, the Gerwa are a deeply religious people. Their Kiani rule through divine lineage and right, and the castes of the Ger keep everything ordered as their gods willed it at the dawn of time. These castes are: priest, warrior, cow herder, swine herder, farmer, tradesman, scribe, and sailor/carter.

Ger has emerged from a recent period of isolation caused by a civil war and the rise of the Takan kingdom to the north. Since the fall of Barak Barad and the cementing of the Paketi dynasty, the Gerwa have once again turned their sight outwards. Almost immediately, they came into conflict with the tribal nations of the Ungathi to the south and west. The people of Ger (the Gerwa) travel the Zaharets as merchants, wanderers, and itinerant scholars. Although they are not pervasive, most Luathi have seen at least a handful of these strange people over the course of their life.

VIRTUES

The three virtues of the Gerwa culture are devotion (*Follower of the Six and the Eight*), obedience (*Servant of a Rigid Order*), and self-control (*An Iron-like Will*). The Gerwa believe their gods, the Six and the Eight, ordained everything in creation. This ordination flows down from the gods to the Kiani, and then through the castes. As such, knowing one's place in creation and living accordingly is a holy task. Typical Gerwa follow the will of their gods, and the will of those whom the gods have placed over them, without question. This obedience is an act of devotion to the Six and the Eight. They believe that only through control of thought and action can one live in accordance with the precepts of their caste. This desire for personal control leads to a disciplined mindset; as such, the typical Gerwa is reserved compared to a Luathi or a Melkoni. Through control and obedience, the Gerwa believe they can bring order to creation and enable their gods to awaken once more.

FAITH: THE SIX AND THE EIGHT

The Gerwa serve the Six and the Eight. The Six are the primal deities who created the world, while the Eight are their children who govern the world. From these gods came not only the first humans, but the first Kiani, the Priest-Kings and -Queens of Ger. It was these first Kiani who established the kingdom of Ger, divided the peoples into castes, and established the first Kianic dynasty.

The Six and the Eight constantly warred with other deities in Gerwa mythology, entities of great power that reside above and below the mortal world. During these wars, unknown beings slew the Six, and their bodies were entombed in great edifices of stone. The Gerwa believe that the Six will return only when all Gerwa are faithful to their calling, hence their devout obedience to the order of the world.

The Ger never refer to the Six by name. In fact, Gerwa consider it a great blasphemy for anyone to speak of the dead, deity or otherwise, by name. Instead, they use metaphors to refer to the dead – both mortal and divine. The Six are called:

- Father of Water
- Lady of Heaven
- Flesh of Earth
- Faces of the Moons
- The Balance of the World
- The Eye of Wisdom

The Gerwa worship these deities in secret, through cults that attempt to speed their awakening via dark rites. These cults propitiate the Six with sacrifices, with the intent of turning their eyes to other places.

The Eight, the children of the Six, live enshrined in temple-fortresses, where their priests and priestess tend to their needs. They are listed below with the areas of creation they govern in the Six's absence:

- Aahote, Lord of Kiani and Severed God
- Amendiris, Lady of Aahote and Mother of Gerwa
- Henutmehut, Warrioress and Protector of Gerwa
- Bebis, Keeper of Herds
- Djhutemos, Keeper of Knowledge and only offspring of the Eye of Wisdom
- Kaapher, Lady of Writing and Trade
- Kephut, Lady of Water and Fertility and Beer
- Anu, The Judge of the Dead.

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

Hekas, Will-workers

The Hekas of Ger are similar to the Hasheers of the Luathi, but they lack the Hasheers' structure. They are insular students of the world, who take on but one or two apprentices in a lifetime. The Gerwa hold the Hekas in fearful awe, seeing them as damned for operating outside the order of the gods, yet terribly potent. Hekas delve into the magic of artifice, imbuing physical objects and natural materials with the essence of the supernatural world. This includes the arts of alchemy, artifice, and binding.

Servants of the Eight

The largest and most pervasive of the cults in Ger, the Hem-Netjer (male) and Hemet-Netjer (female) of the Eight represent those who follow all 'living gods'. They govern the kingdom under the Kiani, who is the chief priest among them. Many Gerwa initiate into specific cults that worship a singular god, such as Bebis or Anu, or worship the 'dead gods' of the Six. The tradition represented here is – in the broadest sense – the most Ger-like. They call upon the powers of their gods for protection, fertility, and abundance.

TYPICAL JACKALS

Outcasts

For some Gerwa, the strict caste system of Ger is stifling. They want more from life, and so they leave the ordered structure of Ger for the wildness of the War Road. Ex-soldiers, those who want more than their caste allows, and lone Hekas whose lust for knowledge can no longer be tolerated by the community all find solace in a group of Jackals.

Followers of the Six and the Eight

Ger once extended its influence all the way to fallen Keta in the north. Those who would see their gods resurrected or who wish to recover the artefacts of their priesthood often find they must travel beyond the boundaries of the kingdom, seeking out Gerwa ruins in foreign lands that Ger once claimed.

Recruiters, Traders, and Spies

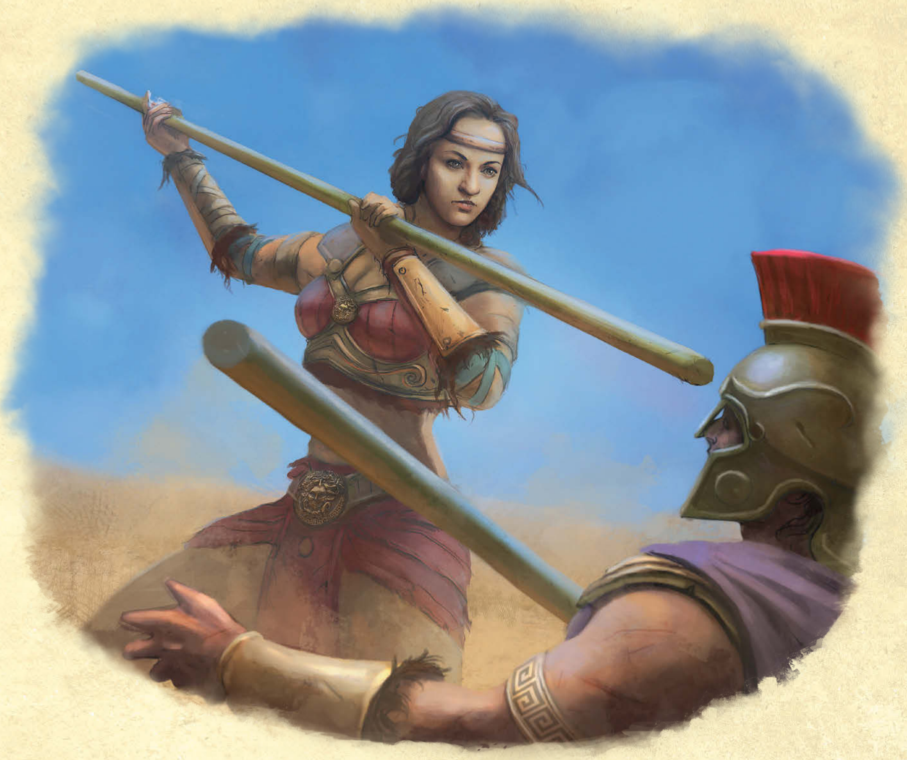
Gerwa look out for Ger interests. With the Luathi starting to organize and re-establish themselves where the Takan once ruled, the Gerwa travel to bring news back to the Kiani. Others seek to bring Jackals back to Ger to aid in the Ungathi wars in the west. Still others seek to draw Luathi and Melkoni into a web of deception, laying the groundwork for exploitation.

APPEARANCE

Physically, the Gerwa possess skin tones ranging from a warm brown to a deep black. Their hair, which most keep at shoulder length, is typically a shade of brown. Gerwa men usually sculpt their facial hair into a long and pointed beard, and both sexes use cosmetics to indicate a variety of statuses: marriage, spiritual journeys, caste, and others. The average Gerwa stands slightly taller than a Luathi, at just shy of four cubits (5'10"). Their primary language is Gerwan.

NAMES

Male: Ashor, Ba-en Nafar, Iuput, Ka'a, Ka-men, Khamat, Khem-mose, Menkhtu, Nahi, Pa-keti, Sa, Sa-nakht, Se-nefer, Uoser, Usat.
Female: Beket, Bet, Iset, Iuput, Meris, Meryet, Nebet, Nofret, Senbet, Tentsai, Tiye, Tuya, Udjeb-ten, Uiay, Usekh-mehi.



MELKONI, THE COLONISTS FROM THE WEST

Nikias felt the spear point draw a line of fire along his ribs. It drove the breath from his lungs. With a grunt he stepped back from his opponent, dropping to one knee from the force of the blow.

Persephone drew back the wooden practice spear from the lunge and assumed an easy posture, watching him as she balanced on the balls of her feet.

"You are dead, again, warrior," she said in a playful tone. The priestess of Ryla tossed the short spear into her left hand, the wooden haft producing a dull sound where it hit the rim of her shield, as she offered her right to the kneeling Nikias. He accepted and allowed himself to be drawn to his feet.

"You are too hot, here" Persephone said, thumping her hand to her chest, "You must learn to either stand against the strong blow or control your impatience, or you will continually lose, here and in the arena of Krorylа's forums. Remember the story of Lykos, when he stood against the Daughters of Ceenon."

Nikias knew the tale, as all warriors of Lykos did. His hand gripped the training spear tighter. He could hear the soft murmurs of the others in the gymnasium's training grounds. Sweat dripped down his back, and his cheeks flushed.

"Lykos won that battle through cunning and power!" Nikias lashed out at the priestess with a series of quick strikes to her face and body. The training space filled with the clacking of wood as Persephone parried and the two began their dance again.

"No, Nikias. Lykos won that battle by losing. Kroryla was saved at the cost of one man." Their shields clashed together as both combatants attempted to momentarily overpower the other. "Lykos was the son of our goddess, a gifted warrior, and a cunning leader."

Persephone gave ground quickly, spinning away with the grace of one of her order. Nikias stumbled into the empty space where she once stood. He felt the stunning blow of her spear against the base of his skull. Man, shield, and spear tumbled to the chalky sand of the training floor.

"But Lykos was wise enough to know that while Kroryla could not survive the wrath of the daughter of Ceenon, it could survive without him."

The butt of Persephone's spear struck the ground, inches from Nikias' nose.

"Without wisdom, your passion is a flame running wild through a wheat field. It will consume everything, even itself, without restraint."

Persephone dropped down to squat next to the still stunned Nikias. As he looked up, the sun behind the priestess framed her silhouette in light.

"But passion tempered can accomplish anything. Even living beyond death, as Lykos does." She stood and held out her hand yet again to Nikias.

"Again?"

OVERVIEW

The lands of the Melkoni lie many weeks to the northwest of the Zaharets. The Melkoni homelands are a coalition of independent cities and their surrounding lands, bound together in several 'leagues' for mutual defence and ideology. It is a land of great philosophers, warriors, and demi-gods. Forty years ago, the Melkoni established a colony west of Orsem Honess, the town of Kroryla. It is a growing city, attracting Melkoni from the west and those Luathi interested in Melkoni trade and culture from the east. Founded by the demi-god Lykos and poised on the edge of the Zaharets, Kroryla brings trade and ideas from the west into the Land of Risings.

Recently, more Melkoni have begun to arrive in Kroryla: not colonists, but refugees. It seems that two of the leagues in the west have gone to war, and many of those caught in-between are turning eastward for safety.

VIRTUES

The three virtues of the Melkoni are wisdom (*The Unmoved Soul*), fortitude (*Bear All Things*), and passion (*The Fires of Life*). The Melkoni value those who can rightly discern the wisest path, both for the individual as well as the community. As such, they look to leaders who possess patience, forethought, and self-reflection. The Melkoni possess a history of conflict and warfare between the city-states of their homeland. In Melkoni literature, old grievances, divine mandates, or charismatic leaders often press for war. This history has forged a people who, for better or worse, do not waver or break once committed to a path. Given the dichotomy between their desire for wise leadership and their tendency to cleave to a chosen path, Melkoni struggle to balance the more extreme excesses in their life, as one can see in the Cult of Ryla, the goddess of war and love. Passion often clouds their judgement and leads to them to commit rash actions.

FAITH: THE PANTHEON

The Melkoni worship a vast network of greater and lesser gods, titans, spirits, and demi-gods, which govern every aspect of creation. Although all of them are related and interconnected, most Melkoni revere one deity or deific family above all. Each city and family has a group of deities they worship directly, while still acknowledging the existence of others. The gods of the Melkoni are passionate, and they bear many of the flaws found among mortals. They smite their followers for slights, lead them to war against a rival's followers, and spend much of their time revelling on a mountain in the Melkoni homelands.

The Melkoni's worship of the Pantheon revolves around seeking to please their deity, or rather to avoid incurring their deity's wrath. They do this through sacrifices, honouring the patron deity in day-to-day living, and employing oracles and diviners to seek the gods' will.

In Kroryla, the Melkoni colony in the Zaharets, three main gods are worshipped by the Melkoni:

- Araton – the chief of the Pantheon, and lord of the sky
- Ryla – the goddess of War, Love, and Victory, and patron goddess of Kroryla
- Lykos – local demi-god, founder of the colony of Kroryla, and son of Ryla.

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

Rylareia, Priests of Ryla

Those Melkoni who follow Ryla seek to embrace the passions that run deep in the Melkoni culture. Casting aside the virtue of temperance, they see life as a series of passionate moments of hate and love. Melkoni do not see these as opposite principles, but as facets of the same goddess. The Rylareia use the example of Ryla to inspire passion in others, guide their arms in combat, and heal wounds afterwards.

Warriors of Lykos

Lykos is the founder of Kroryla, and the son of Ryla. His stories inspire Melkoni to seek out the resources of the Zaharets and claim them for their city. The warriors of Lykos call upon rites that harken back to their founder's deeds to grant them endurance, skill in negotiations, and the ability to strengthen the bonds of the Melkoni community.

The Melkoni worship Lykos because he completed the Seven Trials, which proved his divinity, established Kroryla, and enabled him to ascend to Araton's court after his death. These were the Seven Trials:

- Trial of the Nyssalis – in which Lykos claimed the place for Kroryla from a Nyssalis
- Trial of the Herd – in which Lykos brought peace to the warring families
- Trial of the Walls – in which Lykos raised the walls of Kroryla in a single night
- Trial of the Fire – in which Lykos brought the sacred flame of Ryla to the city
- Trial of the Paths – in which Lykos slew Takan to mix their blood into the mortar for the streets of the city
- Trial of the Daughters – in which Lykos tricked the Daughters of Ceenon
- Trial of Peace – the apotheosis of the trials, in which Lykos turned the Daughters and himself to stone.

TYPICAL JACKALS

Colonist

The colony of Kroryla is not yet firmly established. The surrounding farms and homes are constantly at risk of Takan raids, unearthed horrors, or worse. These colonists are hardy folk, willing to defend what is theirs. Sadly, not all are able to do so, and those colonists whose homesteads are destroyed often find homes in Jackal packs.

Lykosian

Lykos is a powerful figure in the minds of the Melkoni, and many seek to emulate their god's deeds. Travelling among the Luathi, these Lykosians act as diplomats, envoys, and warriors. They seek to enlighten the barbarians of the Zaharets to the ways of Lykos and his mother Ryla.

Warrior

The Melkoni of Kroryla train most of their citizenry in combat, for the life of a colonist is a dangerous one. The possibility of a Takan attack means they never know when they may have to take part in a shield wall. For most, this is a rare occurrence, but some crave the call of battle. These take up spear and shield and head into the Zaharets proper to seek battle on their own terms.

APPEARANCE

Physically, the Melkoni possess olive skin tones. Their hair ranges from blonde to brown. The average Melkoni stands about three and a half cubits (5'6") tall. Their primary language is Melkonon.

NAMES

Male: Alexandros, Ariston, Asklepiades, Demetrios, Diodoros, Diokles, Epiktetos, Herakleides, Kallias, Nikias, Nikostratos, Philon, Theodoros, Theophilos, Zosimos.
Female: Aristonike, Arkhippe, Athenais, Demetria, Dionysia, Dysistrate, Eirene, Eukoline, Kallisto, Kallistrate, Myrrhina, Nikostrate, Phila, Philoumene, Sostrate.

TRAUJ, THE CLANSMEN OF THE DESERT AND CHILDREN OF GIANTS

Right, then. We were five or six nights out from Yahan, and the bronze sands surrounded us. As usual, the clansmen of the, well, I don't know what you would call them, but we call them 'Arrows' on account of their wrist tattoos, were waiting for us. Every time we leave the fort, and cross the hills, the Arrows are waiting for us. The masters called for a halt round the old ruins, so they could 'trade' with the Arrows. More like pay the Arrows' toll.

You see, the sands... they hide, well, they hide 'things'. And the Arrows, they know how to handle those things. Beastfolk, sandpits, other clans, the Arrows deal with them every day. Aberek, he was new to the routes and was angry with the masters. "They hired us, don't they think we got what it takes?" I remember it being like that my first time, watching the masters pour out gold and spices and wine for these desert savages.

Right, so there we were, nearly a week out from Yahan, spending the night in the cool of the ruins that towered above us. I had had a run of luck at dice and didn't have to pull watch for another three nights. So, me and my wineskin wandered the camp. Oura was up and full, giving off enough light to make the fires a bit needless. Not that we would, mind you, not set up the fires. There are things in the sands….

I wandered our camp and came to a fire where a young Arrow sat alone, cleaning the bronze tips of his javelins with handfuls of sand. He saw me but didn't say anything. At the time, I just thought he must only speak his own backwards language. But I was warm with wine and wanted to at least hear the sound of my own voice. The fire between us, I tried passing the time with chat. Nothing, no reply. Just the soft scrape of sand against metal. I gave him my name, the name of my village, the name of my cat. He just sat there, scouring the metal. Finally, I asked him if he thought we would come across any of the beastfolk on our route. This question, he answered.

"Always." That was it, just always. But I had gotten one answer out of him, and with a half-full wineskin still in my hands, I tried to get another. Answer, I mean. Turns out, the clansmen are all kinds of chatty when it comes to the beastfolk. Numbers, good ways to kill them, the Arrows loved talking about it. I had to have ten years on that kid, and he knew more about killing beasts than I did. I passed the wineskin over as he talked. There was something in his face, a hate for beasts deeper than the Nawsi's men back in Yahan. With just a little wine left sloshing in the skin, I asked the question I shouldn't have. I asked him why he and his kin hated the beastfolk so.

The scouring stopped, and I saw the sand fall to the ground. I swear, I thought he was going to come across the fire at me. We sat there, staring, with the wine rising hot in my throat. Then, the boy opened his mouth.

"Soft. You are soft, thinking the Trauj have no reason to hate. The Trauj have all reasons to hate the mouli. You would not be soft, save for the Trauj and our hate. I'll tell you why we hate. We hate because we know. The Trauj have kept their eyes east, for east is our past. Long ago, giants ruled the land, and they stood tall and strong against the darkness of the east. For years and years, tides of darkness broke against the giants' halls, til the darkness

and its beasts swept the land. Giants drowned in oceans of blood… in the tide the darkness brought. When they left, the life of the land left, too, leaving only dead sand behind. The tide bore the giants' children east. For years and years, the children lived under this… weight… of darkness, under lash of the beasts. This weight fell on their shoulders and ground them down. They are less, now."

I was struck dumb, frozen, the wineskin hovering halfway between my lips and my lap. The Arrow, he just kept going, as though the wine had loosened his tongue.

"The last giants came for their kin, and overthrew the east, but this cost the land the last giants. The children were free, but less then. There was no place for them in the west, and they would not dwell in the east. The last giant led the Trauj to dwell in the ruins of the land and told them to sharpen their memory and hate. To keep it pointed east, so the beasts would never raise the Serpent's Standard. And so, we hate. Whetted on the flesh of beasts and oiled with blood. We hate, soft one, and so we know."

The Arrow then nodded, as if this story told me everything I needed to know. He bent down, picked up a handful of sand, and started again on the javelins. I sat there watching him until the fire burned down. He said nothing else, as if I weren't there. The rest of my questions, and I had plenty, went unanswered. I gave up, because my wineskin was empty. I stumbled back to my tent. I chuckled, wondering why I had allowed myself to be taken in by such a story. Oura was bright as I made it to my tent. Her light lit the green stone arches and rubble scattered around the oasis. Those arches… they stood too tall, far too tall. I was suddenly sober, and wrapped myself in my blanket, and didn't sleep at all. As we travelled the route, I saw each village – every one – was built around a broken piece of the same green stone. Every single one. I had never seen it before. I saw something else, too. Whenever their minds wandered, whenever quiet took hold of the villages, the clansmen's eyes drifted east. It was as if, when they were still, something pulled at them. Pulling their thoughts east.

~Overheard in a tavern in Ameena Noani~

OVERVIEW

The Luasa Desert lies to the east of the Zaharets, beyond the peaks of the A'hule Asa. It starts at the eastern edges of the mountains and extends far to the east. The Luasa Desert is a harsh land, which has bred a hard people: the Trauj. They are nomads without villages, but they possess the finest horses in all the Zaharets. Indeed, the rest of the cultures make do with ponies or donkeys, far lesser beasts compared with the magnificent Trauj horse.

The Trauj travel the desert in clans, from oasis to oasis, caring only for their clan and their horses. They know the secret places and ruins within the desert and use this knowledge to survive. Most of the other cultures know them only through trade and raids.

The 13 clans of the Trauj have scattered throughout the desert. The westernmost, the Ashan Mudi (Arrow clan), travel the Zaharets most often. However, the Luathi maintain relations with others as well – the Ashan Haluzanrab (Dream Flower clan), Ashan Tasanizanrab (Blossoming Flower clan), Stone Dhub clan, and Water Runners, to name a few. Although the clans war with each other, they save their true hatred for the Takan. It was the Trauj warriors who came pouring over the Wuma Ejo in thunderous waves when the Luathi finally arose against the Takan, aiding them in casting back the beasts.

VIRTUES

The virtues of the Trauj are hatred (*An Ancient Hate*), remembrance (*Hearer of Old Tales*), and glory (*Seeker of Glory*). The Trauj instil these virtues in their children at an early age. Hate is not a sentiment reserved solely for the Takan, however, as they also have a deep and abiding hate for the works of the Mouadah in the east. None outside the clan know why this is, but the clans keep a constant watch on the east. The virtue of remembrance is linked to this. The Trauj have no written language; instead, each member of the clan is part of the living memory of the deeds and hate of their people. A Trauj can recount the deeds of their ancestors all the way back to the fall of the 'Serpent's Standard', a common phrase among Trauj curses. Consequently, all Trauj seek to live a life about which their descendants will tell stories. They seek a place for their lives to fit in among the living memory of their people, and often this leads them to acts of recklessness in an attempt to achieve greatness in a single blaze of action and bravery.

FAITH: THE YAHTAH

The Trauj turn to their ancestors to guide the clans today. Their stories teach lessons, inspire greatness, and keep the traditions of the Trauj firmly engraved in their descendants' hearts and minds. The Yahtah are those Trauj who earned a place in the stories of their clans. Those who tell the tales of these ancestors are known as the Yahtahmi. They can call upon their ancestors to guide them, enlighten them, and even inhabit them in times of great peril.

The greatest of the Trauj ancestors defy clan lines, and their stories are universal:

- Ilou – the first Alkitar, who hunted the Takan throughout the desert
- Tamat – she who found the great well in the desert, which saved the Trauj from death
- Yakhia – he who crossed the desert
- Zahra – she who broke the carnivorous horses of the north and brought them to the clans

MAGICAL TRADITIONS

Yahtahmi, Rememberers

Among the Trauj, there are those whose calling is to live in the past, in the moments of the clans' history that echo with glory. These few who tell the tales with power are known as the Yahtahmi. It is their duty to remember the history of their people, and to inspire new generations with the tales of the old. The Trauj can call upon their ancestors to inspire, gain insight, and remember the past to shape the present.

Alkitar, Hatespitters

The Luasa Desert shaped the Trauj in many ways, but no trait is more potent than their hatred of the Takan. For some of the Trauj, their hatred of the Takan is more than part of their culture. It has taken root deep in the wells of their souls, and now flows out in all that they do. The Trauj say the giants of old inspire and imbue the Alkitar, pushing them towards a madness from which they can only find respite by slaying the Takan. They say that the giants of old will not find peace in the Silent Lands until the last Takan is slain in the in the

Zaharets is slain; until then the giants' spirits continue to claim Trauj as Alkitar. The Alkitar can call upon the hate of the giant within to aid them in seeking, rending, and burning the works of the Takan, wherever they find them.

TYPICAL JACKALS

Glory Questers

All Trauj seek to carry out some singular heroic deed to earn them a place among the Yahtah. Some believe they cannot find the glory they seek in the Luasa, surrounded by others who seek the same, so many Glory Questers travel into the Zaharets to achieve their goal among foreigners and soft folk.

Traders

The clans survive through trade with outsiders. Many Trauj sign up as caravan escorts or traders themselves, moving along the War Road to bring back goods for their clans. A great many of these Trauj find themselves meeting up with Jackals who also travel the roads, for there is safety in numbers.

Alkitar

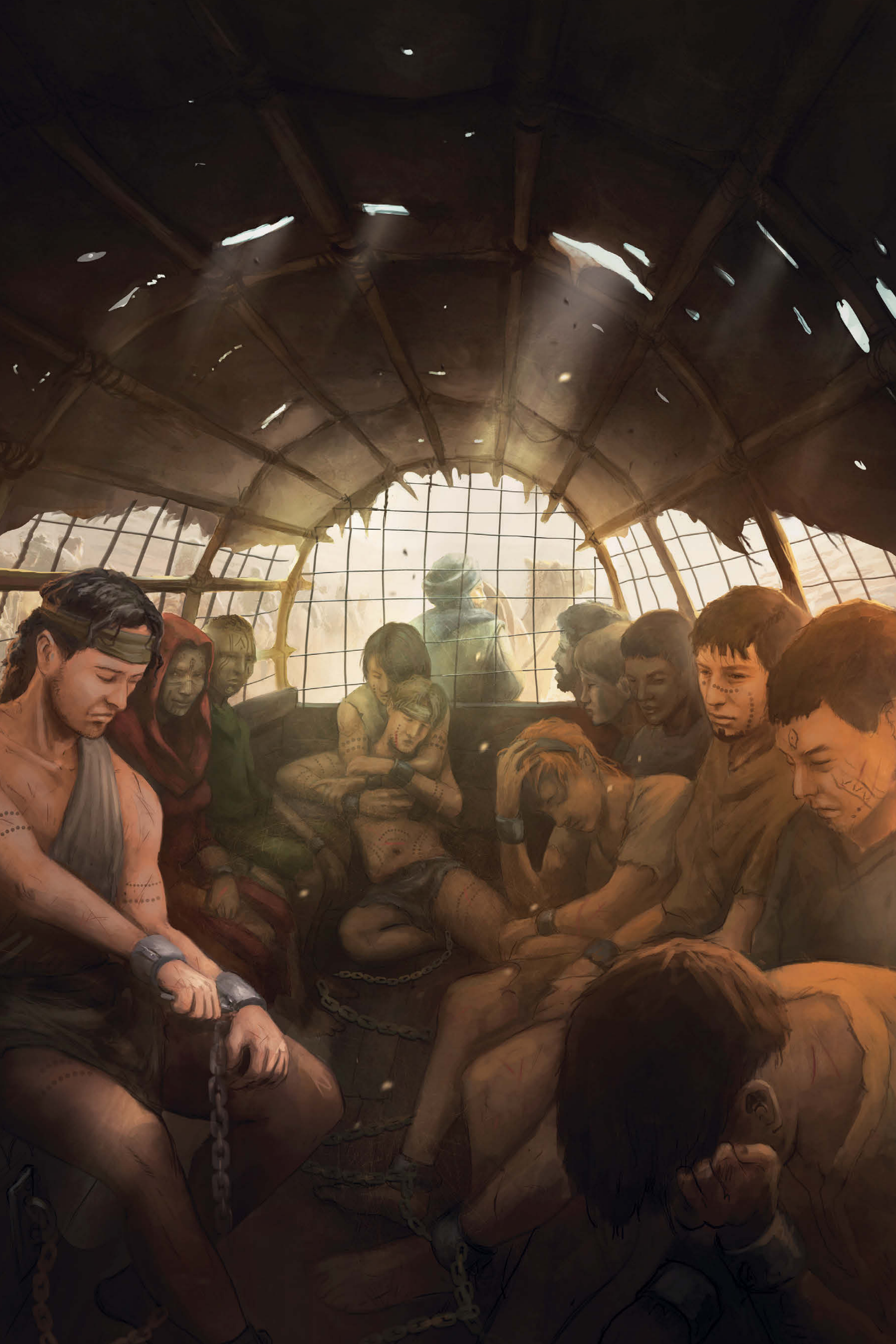
Where the beasts go, the Alkitar follow. Alkitar have such hate for the Takan that they seek out the beasts in their old refuges. Jackal packs welcome these Trauj into their midst, at least until they die or get their pack killed by biting off more than they can handle.

APPEARANCE

Physically, the Trauj are similar to the Luathi. They possess the same bronze skin and hair; however, many of the Trauj have deep black hair. They traditionally keep their hair long, and the men shave their faces and bodies. The average Trauj stands nearly four and a quarter cubits (6'4") tall. Their primary language is Luathii, with many loan words from Hulathii and Mouadran.

NAMES

Male: Amayas, Askiou, Beketa, Chikat, Ehenu, Ikemma, Khemidou, Khyar, Louki, Meslar, Okha, Rezkou, Serada, Uksem, Yakhia.
Female: Baya, Dassine, Khatti, Lella, Malla, Rahma, Rayshabu, Sekata, Tahat, Tahenkot, Takama, Tanelhir, Tanermat, Umeyda, Yendjelan.
Trauj Clan (Ashan): Ashan Mudi (Arrow Clan), Ashan Haluzanrab (Dream Flower Clan), Ashan Tasanizanrab (Blooming Flower Clan).



CHAPTER 3

CHARACTER CREATION

Twelve sat chained together in the back of a slavers' wagon as it rolled over the sand of the desert. The flesh merchant's litter, carried ahead on the shoulders of mutes, stopped every now and again, allowing the hard man to inspect his wares as they travelled east.

Twelve sat, skin blistering under the desert sun, while the wheels cried out in protest as they ground around the axle. Their guards rode lean desert ponies, lashes and bronze rapiers at their sides. The harsh men and women had made their willingness, even eagerness, to inflict violence well known on the backs of their charges.

Eleven sat passively, resigned to their fate. The twelfth, a Ger, watched the whole of the caravan carefully. The guards' movements, little habits, even the figures on the distant hills, which none of the guards had noticed. Nothing escaped his sight. And his hands were as sure as his eyes as they ground through the bronze links with a Hekas file.

As a player, your first step in adventuring in Kalypsis is to make a character. Your character is your persona in the game. Characters in *Jackals* have no classes or professions. This gives you the freedom to make any character concept you want, but it does mean that character creation is a bit more free-form than other games. You can find a summary of character creation on page 256.

The character sheet on page 260 is also available for download at **www.ospreypublishing.com/gaming_resources_roleplaying**.

To create a character, follow these steps:

1. **Concept** – create a Jackal concept.
2. **Choose Culture** – choose your Jackal's culture, apply cultural skill bonuses, and select a cultural virtue.
3. **Ritualist** – decide whether your Jackal is a ritualist, and if so, to which tradition they will have access.
4. **Generate Attributes** – generate and spend points on attributes, and calculate abilities derived from those attributes.
5. **Generate Skills** – generate and spend points by skill category.
6. **Choose Traits** – choose four traits (or two, if your Jackal is a ritualist).
7. **Character Questions** – answer the character questionnaire for extra advancements.
8. **Select Equipment** – select equipment packages from the choices provided.

STEP 1: CONCEPT

The first step is to come up with a concept for your Jackal. The concept phase is important because it will help you make choices as you move through character creation. Do you want to play a brutish Melkoni warrior or a lithe Gerwa priest? Think of the concept as your occupation in the world of Kalypsis, the job your character had before they became a Jackal. Chapter 2 has several examples of concepts for each culture.

STEP 2: CHOOSE CULTURE

The next, and perhaps most important, step is to choose your culture. Each of the four cultures in the Zaharets have unique outlooks, virtues, and skill sets. Select your culture from the following list and apply the skill bonuses. Additionally, select one of your culture's virtues for your character. Your cultural virtue may be called on once per session to positively affect the outcome of a roll. It can turn a failure into a success or a success into a critical, assuming you can justify how the virtue applies to the roll. See the individual cultural sections in Chapter 2 for expanded explanations on where these virtues come from, and see below for examples of how you can use virtues in game. Note that you speak the language of your culture, as well as Howls.

LUATHI

For more on the Luathi, see page 17.

Skill Bonuses

Melee Combat +5%, Healing +5%, Survival +10%, Willpower +10%

Virtues

- *Bonds of Family*: Luathi Jackals can call on this virtue when they fight for their friends and family, or when one of their family members shared information to aid in the check.
- *Fires of Freedom*: the Luathi spirit will not willingly be chained again. Luathi Jackals may call on this virtue to defend against bondage (physical or spiritual) or to fight to ensure others remain free.
- *Seeker of Knowledge*: the Luathi Jackal is obsessed with recovering lost history and shoring up their knowledge of the world. They may call upon this virtue to find and decipher ancient knowledge, or to apply their knowledge to the check at hand.

Languages

Howls, Luathii

GERWA

For more on the Gerwa, see page 21.

Skill Bonuses

Deception +5%, Ranged Combat +5%, Healing +10%, Ancient Lore +10%

Virtues

- *An Iron-like Will*: the Ger take solace in the fact that the world is as their gods ordained it, which can can lead to them being intractable and hard-hearted. Ger Jackals can call on this virtue when they seek to apply their dogged determination to a task.
- *Follower of the Six and the Eight*: the Ger gods are called upon for protection and cursing. Ger Jackals can call upon this virtue when a specific aspect of the god or goddess applies to the check – for example calling upon Djhutemos while attempting to unravel a riddle.
- *Servant of a Rigid Order*: the Ger believe that the Six and the Eight have ordained their roles in this life. Ger Jackals can call on this virtue when they act in accordance with their caste, attempt to understand their own culture, or when they attempt to understand how the world works.

Languages

Howls, Gerwan

MELKONI

For more on the Melkoni, see page 26.

Skill Bonuses

Melee Combat +5%, Trade+5%, Dodge +10%, Influence +10%

Virtues

- *The Unmoved Soul*: the Melkoni value the ability to be the movers of their own souls. A life of contemplation and philosophical reflection is seen as the height of this virtue. Melkoni Jackals may call upon this viture in situations where they are under duress, resiting a supernatural influence, or standing firm against the changing world.
- *Bear All Things*: Melkoni value the ability to walk the narrow line between their burning passions and their desire for wise action. This leads to the virtue of enduring what the gods bring into their lives and bearing what is given to them. Melkoni Jackals may use this virtue to aid in checks to endure or survive the harshness of the world or to master themselves when others seek to provoke them.
- *The Fires of Life*: the Melkoni are a passonate people, and some let those passions run wild. Melkoni Jackals may use this virtue on checks where violence or a lust for life will aid them.

Languages

Howls, Melkonon

TRAUJ

For more on the Trauj, see page 30.

Skill Bonuses

Ride +5%, Unarmed Combat +5%, Athletics +10%, Endurance +10%

Virtues

- *An Ancient Hate*: the Trauj nurse an emnity with those of the east, specifically their soldiers (the Takan), their rulers (Mouathenics), and their lords (Rathic). Trauj Jackals may call on this virtue when recalling lore, tracking, or dealing with these creatures.
- *Hearer of Old Tales*: the Trauj storytellers keep the great deeds of the ancestors alive in the hearts and minds of their people. Trauj Jackals can call on this virtue to remember the lessons learned in the old tales and apply them to current circumstances.
- *Seeker of Glory*: only the greatest of the Trauj have their stories retold by the Yahtahmi. Many Trauj Jackals seek to live lives worthy of song. They can call upon this virtue when attempting a deed that will add to their legend.

Languages

Howls, Trahan

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION, STEP 2

Kelly is making her character for Trish's Zaharets game. After she looks over the setting information, Kelly chooses to play a Gerwa Hemet-Netjer (Servant of the Eight). She records the +5% to Deception and Ranged Combat, as well as the +10% to Healing and Ancient Lore on her character sheet. She then chooses *Follower of the Six and the Eight* for her cultural virtue, as it represents her character's devotion to the gods.

STEP 3: RITUALIST

Now, you must, decide whether your character will be a ritualist. As a ritualist, you start with one fewer cultural and general trait, in return for the ability to cast powerful rites. If a Jackal is a ritualist, they gain access to the Devotion attribute and rites provided by their tradition.

If your character is a ritualist, choose a tradition from their culture and select four starting rites from that tradition. The traditions are briefly outlined below. See Chapter 5 for more information on rites and a list of ritualist traditions by culture.

If your character is not a ritualist, skip this step.

LUATHI TRADITIONS

- Hasheer: loremasters and students of the past, whose knowledge of the Law can affect the world around them.
- Kahar: priestesses and priests of Alwain, their rites invoke his purity and light.

GERWA TRADITIONS

- Hekas: alchemists and outcasts from the Ger caste system, their rites invoke sympathetic magic and distillation of the elements of the world.
- Hem-Netjer / Hemet-Netjer (Servant of the Eight): priestesses and priests of the living gods of Ger, their rites call on their gods to manifest their influence and servants.

MELKONI TRADITIONS

- Rylareia: followers of Ryla, the goddess of passion, are warriors and lovers whose hands can heal and slay in the name of their goddess.
- Warrior of Lykos: followers of the demi-god Lykos, son of Ryla. They emulate the deeds of Lykos to invoke their rites.

TRAUJ TRADITIONS

- Alkitar: beserkers who bear the blood of giants and whose hatred for the Takan is self-destructive.
- Yahtahmi: storytellers whose story-rites can grant the listeners the traits and deeds of the ancestors.

STEP 4: GENERATE ATTRIBUTES

The next step is to generate your attribute scores and derived abilities.

Spend 17 attribute points. All attributes begin at nine, which is the human average. A character may not begin the game with an attribute higher than 18. You may reduce an attribute to a minimum of six – each point below nine gives a negative trait (see page 156). The points taken away from an attribute can be redistributed to other attributes.

You may take up to three points of Corruption to gain an equivalent number of attribute points.

Your attributes determine your derived abilities, as well as the number of points you have to spend on skills in the next step.

ATTRIBUTES

Strength [STR]: this attribute defines how physically strong your character is and how well they apply this strength. It affects Martial skills and how much damage they do in combat.

Deftness [DFT]: this attribute defines how agile and skilled your character is and covers both hand–eye and total body coordination. It affects Clash Points and Defensive, Martial, and Urban skills.

Vitality [VIT]: this attribute defines how resilient your character is. It factors into Mettle, Wounds, and defensive skills.

Courage [COU]: this attribute defines your character's bravery and mental resolve. It factors into Mettle, Clash Points, and Defensive, Martial, and Urban skills.

Wisdom [WIS]: this attribute defines your character's mental resolve, intellect, and resourcefulness. It factors into many skills, as well as spell casting.

Devotion [DEV]: this attribute defines your character's connection to the spiritual world. It factors into rites and Devotion Points (DP), which your ritualist spends to invoke rites. If your character is not a ritualist, their Devotion starts at zero and cannot be increased above that at character creation. If your character is a ritualist, their Devotion starts at nine and can be increased like any other attribute

Corruption: this attribute defines Chaos' taint and hold on your character. It starts at zero at character creation. You may take up to three points of Corruption to gain an equivalent number of points to spend on other attributes.

DERIVED ABILITIES

Derived abilities do not require you to assign points, they are entirely determined by your character's attributes. Simply note your characters derived attributes once you spend all your attribute points. When deriving abilities, always round down.

Initiative: this governs how quickly a character can react in combat (see page 63). It is equal to the character's Deftness score +1d6.

Melee Damage Bonus: characters with high Strength receive bonus damage dice in melee combat. See the Melee Damage Bonus table below.

MELEE DAMAGE BONUS

STR	Damage Dice
1–2	–1d6
3–5	–1d4
6–8	–1d3
9–11	0
12–14	+1d4
15–17	+1d6
18–20	+1d8
21–23	+1d10
24–26	+2d6
27–29	+2d8
30+	+2d10

Move: the number of yards a character can move in a turn is equal to 10 + DFT/3.

Mettle: represents the character's will to fight and their endurance (see page 68). It is equal to (VIT + COU)/2.

Wounds: represent the amount of actual damage a character can suffer before dying (see page 67). Wounds per row = VIT/2.

Clash Points: represent the character's battlefield awareness and ability to react to threats and new situations. Characters can use these points to react to enemy attacks, turning them into opposed rolls (see page 69). Your Clash Point total is equal to (DFT + COU)/5.

Devotion Points: a resource for invoking rites. Max Devotion Points = DEV.

VALOUR AND WOUNDS

Each character in *Jackals* has two stats that measure their ability to stand and fight: Valour and Wounds.

Valour represents a character's fighting spirit, martial prowess, and luck. Valour damage represents near misses, painful but not life-threatening bruises, and the like. Jackals begin each combat with Valour points equal to their Mettle stat multiplied by those Wound rows which are not completely filled. Subtract damage from a Jackal's Valour points first , before applying Wounds.

Wounds represent those enemy strikes that have a real chance of killing a character. Characters begin with three rows of Wounds, and each row has a number of boxes equal to their VIT/2. Damage taken after a character's Valour drops to 0 is subtracted from Wounds. For each full row of Wounds taken, a character's ability to recover Valour decreases. After the third row is filled (that is, the Jackal is reduced to 0 Wounds), the character is dead.

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION, STEP 4

Kelly now looks at spending her attribute points. Because she wants to be able to invoke rites, Kelly raises her Devotion to 15, which costs 6 of her 17 points. She leaves her Deftness at its base of 9 because average Deftness is OK with her, but she does raise her Strength to 10 (spending 1 point). She raises her Vitality and Courage to 12 (spending 3 points each) because she wants her character to have higher than average Valour and Wounds. Finally, she sets her Wisdom to 13 (spending her last 4 points) because she wants her character to have more Knowledge skills (additionally, high Wisdom increases the starting skill rating of all rites).

She then records her derived attributes:

- Initiative: 9 + d6
- Damage bonus: +0
- Move: 13
- Mettle: 12
- Wounds: 6 per row, for a total of 18
- Clash Points: 4
- Max Devotion Points: 15

STEP 5: GENERATE SKILLS

Next, you generate and spend points in your character's individual skills. Skill categories break up the skill list, with each category gaining points to spend based on the character's attributes. Use the formula for each category to generate the pool of percentage points to add to the starting value of each skill. The percentage next to each skill is the skill's starting value.

You only generate these pools at character creation. Attribute increases do not affect skill points once play begins.

You may not raise any skill higher than 75% during character creation.

You may exchange points between pools on a 2:1 basis. For example, you could reduce your pool of urban skills by 24 points to spend 12 additional points in knowledge skills.

We highly recommend starting Jackals possess one Martial skill and one or two other speciality skills at 65% or higher. This helps ensure the Jackal's survivability and usefulness to the group. Additionally, Survival is an important skill for any traveller of the War Road.

STARTING SKILLS	
Common Skills	
[STR + DFT + VIT + COU + WIS] × 3	
For non-ritualists, this is 186%	
Craft	15%
Drive	15%
Influence	20%
Perception	35%
Perform	20%
Ride	20%
Sail	10%
Survival	20%
Defensive Skills	
[DFT + VIT + COU] × 2	
Dodge	20%
Endurance	25%
Willpower	25%
Martial Skills	
[STR + COU + DFT] × 2	
Athletics	20%
Melee Combat	25%
Ranged Combat	25%
Unarmed Combat	30%

STARTING SKILLS	
Knowledge Skills	
[WIS] × 5	
**You cannot spend points to increase Ancient Lore*	
Culture (Own)	35%
Culture (Other)	15%
Healing	20%
Lore	10%
Ancient Lore	0%*
Urban Skills	
[WIS + COU + DFT] × 2	
Deception	15%
Stealth	20%
Thievery	10%
Trade	20%
Magic Skills	
[DEV] × 5	
Each individual rite starts at (DEV + WIS)%	

SKILL DESCRIPTIONS

Here is the full list of skills in alphabetical order.

Ancient Lore (0%)

Ancient Lore is a special skill that represents the character's knowledge of the ancient history of the world. This cannot be purchased at character creation (although note that Gerwa characters begin with 10%) or increased through advancements. Only when Jackals encounter such knowledge through play can they increase this skill. This knowledge is handed out by the Loremaster.

Athletics (20%)

This broad skill covers a range of athletic activities useful to Jackals, including acrobatics, climbing, jumping, and swimming.

Craft (15%)

The Craft skill is actually several separate skills (such as baker, basket weaver, bowyer, brewer, butcher, carpenter, redsmith, whitesmith, etc.) grouped under a single heading. It measures the character's ability to make and repair items. As a very rough guide, it takes 1 day per 50 ss of an item's base cost to produce an item. The base cost of the item in materials needed is 50% of the listed finished cost. During character creation, select one trade as your character's focus. All other Craft attempts are made at –50% to the total skill.

Culture (Own) (35%)/Culture (Other) (15%)

Each Culture skill provides a Jackal with information about the common world view of that group of people (or creatures). This includes history, politics, weather cycles, geography, superstitions, and popular mythology. Culture (Own) is the world view of the people group into which the character is born. All other foreign or alien cultures are Culture (Other). A character is literate in their language when they possess at least 50% in Culture (Own).

Characters can learn to speak the other languages of the Zaharets through the use of Culture (Other). They can always attempt to convey their point through the use of this skill; however, as it increases, Jackals can learn to speak additional languages fluently. For every 25% in Culture (Other), the Jackal picks up an additional language. Jackals can learn the following languages through this skill: Gerwan, Luathii, Melkonon, and Trahan.

Deception (15%)

Deception covers the arts of disguise, sleight of hand, lying, and combat trickery. This skill is opposed by the Perception skill and is modified according to the situation.

Dodge (20%)

The Dodge skill is used to avoid incoming objects that are swung or thrown at the character. Normally, characters use the Dodge skill when they attempt to dodge an incoming blow in combat or a physical hazard that can be avoided, such as falling masonry.

Drive (15%)

If a character is driving a wagon, chariot, or similar vehicle at not more than a walking pace across flat terrain, a Driving skill test is never required. When a character wants to do something out of the ordinary with a vehicle – such as traverse treacherous terrain, jump obstacles, and so on – that is where the Drive skill applies.

Endurance (25%)

This is a measure of how physically tough a character is. The higher a character's Endurance, the more likely they are to handle adverse physical conditions, such as weathering a vicious sandstorm, surviving in a drought, or overcoming the effects of poison or disease.

Healing (20%)

The use of Healing requires suitable medical equipment such as bandages or salves, or appropriate improvised alternatives.

Each use of the Healing skill generally takes a few minutes to perform. Both healer and patient must remain stationary and may not use Combat Actions or Clash Points while this occurs, or the patient will lose the benefits of the Healing.

A character may use the Healing skill for a variety of actions, including treatment of injury or ailment, reviving an unconscious patient, treatment of disease, or curing poisoning.

Influence (20%)

This is the art of verbally persuading another character to do what you want. Characters can use both logical and emotional arguments. If successful in an opposed skill test, the character temporarily sways their audience in favour of their argument. In time, those influenced might understand that they were fast-talked, bamboozled, or hoodwinked and their judgement was clouded, but in the short term, they go along with what the character suggests. Influence skill tests are normally opposed by a Perception, Influence, or Willpower skill check.

Lore (10%)

The Lore skill is an umbrella term for several different skills. The range of possible Lore is only limited by a player's imagination. A list of potential study areas of Lore is listed here: alchemy, art, astronomy, gambling, geography, law, logistics, military tactics, philosophy, and poisons.

Melee Combat (25%)

This skill deals with the art of using melee weapons, such as swords, clubs, spears, polearms, and shields.

Perception (35%)

The Perception skill is used to represent the character's five senses when detecting objects or other characters.

Performance (30%)

A successful test with this skill results in the audience or partner being pleased by the character's Performance. This skill covers acting, composing poetry, dancing, singing, social and intimate situations, readings, and playing an instrument.

Ranged Combat (35%)

This skill covers the use of missile weapons, such as bows, thrown spears, and thrown daggers.

Ride (20%)

If a character is riding a creature at not more than a walking pace across flat terrain, then a Riding test is never required. When a character wants to do something out of the ordinary with a mount – such as traverse treacherous terrain, jump obstacles, ride bareback, and so on – that is where the Ride skill applies.

Rites (DEV + WIS %)

Ritualists start with the four rites of their tradition (see Chapter 5). Each rite acts as an individual skill for purposes of checks and advancements. Each rite possesses a starting percentage equal to the Jackal's DEV + WIS.

Sailing (10%)

This covers small water-borne craft propelled manually by oars or paddles, commonly known as boats, and larger craft powered by sails or rows of oars. Travelling across calm water does not usually require a skill test, but adverse conditions such as currents and weather can bestow penalties.

Stealth (20%)

This skill covers any attempt by a character to move about without being discovered. It covers personal stealth, as well as moving items and people discretely under the scrutiny of observation. These tests are usually opposed by the Perception skill and are modified according to the situation.

Survival (20%)

Broadly speaking, this skill deals with the character's knowledge of the natural world and how to survive within it. Characters use this skill to track, find food and water in the wilderness, and trap and prepare animals. It represents the character's overall ability to survive travel between towns.

Thievery (10%)

Thievery covers the arts of picking locks, picking pockets, disarming traps, forgery, cons, and so on. Thievery also allows a character to find fences for stolen goods, locate black markets, and obtain general information. Such uses of Thievery normally require a minimum of 1d4 hours. Thievery also covers following people down crowded city streets without being noticed. These tests are usually opposed by the Perception skill and are modified according to the situation.

Trade (20%)

This skill is primarily used when characters trade, barter, or otherwise negotiate over the sale of goods. In such transactions, a successful opposed test between the Trade of the buyer versus the Trade of the seller is needed for the buyer to get the best deal. If the buyer wins, they get a discount: –10% for a success or –25% for a critical. If the seller wins, the price they can sell their item for increases by +10% for a success and +25% for a critical. If the opponent fumbles their roll, double the increase or decrease.

The Trade skill also enables the character to determine the value others place on something, estimating its market value. Success allows a character to guess the average monetary value of the object, normally guessing accurately to within 10% of its actual value.

Unarmed Combat (30%)

This skill covers the use of natural attacks. For humans, this involves punching, kicking, and grappling. Non-human characters may also have bite, horn, claw, and tail attacks.

Willpower (25%)

Willpower represents a character's mental resolve and resistance. It is used to resist the effects of magic, and often to resist another character's attempt to use the Influence skill against them.

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION, STEP 5

Kelly first calculates her total pool of points for each skill group. For example, for the Defensive category, she adds her Deftness (9), Vitality (12), and Courage (12) together for a total of 33. She then multiplies this total by two, giving her a total of 66 percentage points to add to the default percentages for Dodge, Willpower, and Endurance. Her final Defensive scores are:

- Dodge: 40%
- Endurance: 45%
- Willpower: 51%.

She then continues with each additional category, generating and applying each category's percentage points in the same fashion.

STEP 6: CHOOSE TRAITS

Characters that are ritualists begin play with one trait from the general list and one from their culture-specific trait list below.

If a character is not a ritualist, they instead choose two general traits and two culture-specific traits. Because these characters do not have access to rites, they are balanced through their additional traits.

Traits have in-game effects on specific skills, and players should underline or mark the skills their traits affect, so they remember to use them during the game. Traits are powerful! They halve the chance your character will critically fail a skill check and double the chance they can critically succeed. They also apply in only very narrow circumstances, so choose wisely.

TRAITS

When you roll a d100 on a skill for which you have a trait, you roll two d10s for the '1s' die and choose the one you want. This increases your chance to critically succeed and decreases your chance to critically fail. Jackals may invoke traits as often as they apply.

GENERAL TRAITS

Name	Application
Bearer of the Eye of Chium	Perception for detecting ambushes
Bearer of the Eye of Mazar	Deception when attempting to cover up a theft
Born Under Gai*	Endurance
Born Under Kauma*	Dodge
Born Under Oura*	Willpower
Dangerous Beauty	Influence for charming or seduction
Follower of the Skyroad	Lore for astronomy
Grave Countenance	Influence for intimidating
Herbalist	Craft for herbalism
Honey-tongued	Influence for fast-talking
Light Touch	Thievery for picking pockets
Nose of the Jackal	Survival for tracking
Redsmith	Craft for forging bronze items

*A character can only possess one 'Born Under' trait.

LUATHI TRAITS

Name	Application
A Balm in Gilead	Healing for treating wounds
Charioteer of Ameena Noani	Drive for chariots
Densom Woodsmen	Survival for forestry
Long Spears of the Luathi	Melee Combat for a long spear
Orsem Trained	Perception for sight
Pathfinder in Ligna Hualla	Lore for nature spirits
Priest of Alwain	Lore for Alwainism
Shepherd of Aeco Plains	Lore for animal husbandry
Slinger of Sentem	Ranged Combat for slings
The Enemy is Known	Lore for Takan
Trained at the Scriptorium	Lore for history
Waste Wanderer	Lore for survival

GERWA TRAITS

Name	Application
Artist of Anu	Melee Combat for daggers
Aspect of the Eight	Lore for one of the Eight gods and its realm
Black Arrows from the South	Ranged Combat for Gerwa bow
Blessed of the Eight	Choose one of the Eight – Rites for that god's traditions
Eye of the Kiani	Culture (Ger) for determining caste and law
Guardian of the Tombs	Perception for seeing what is hidden
Hearer of Dead Whispers	Lore for spirits
Priesthood of Ger	Lore for The Six and the Eight
Raised Among Many Eyes	Stealth in Urban Environments
Trained to Blend	Culture (Other) for disguise
Warrior Caste	Melee Combat for khopesh and shield
Warden of the Priesthood	Melee Combat for mace and shield

MELKONI TRAITS

Name	Application
Arms of Ryla	Melee Combat for short spear and shield
Classically Trained	Influence for rhetoric
Colonist of Melkon	Survival around Kroryla
Eyes of Araton	Lore for law
Heirs of Silver	Sail for travel on the Futhetia Sea
Knower of the Household Gods	Lore for The Pantheon
Refugee of the Western War	Survival for resisting endurance loss
Shield of Lykos	Ranged Combat for shield and javelin
Speaker of the City	Influence for diplomacy
Student of the Melkonian Wars	Lore for siege craft
The Jewels of Melkon	Craft for whitesmithing (items of gold and silver)
Twin Fangs	Melee Combat for two leaf-bladed swords

TRAUJ TRAITS

Name	Application
Brother of Bears	Unarmed Combat for grappling
Blood of Giants	Athletics for feats of strength
Born to the Saddle	Ranged Combat while on horseback; additionally, starts the game with a Trauj horse
Desert Dweller	Lore for Luasa Desert
Desert Rager	Melee Combat for twin scimitars
Dune Rider	Riding for endurance riding
East Watcher	Lore for Mouadah
Heir of Ilou	Survival for tracking Takan
Heir of Yakhia	Survival for the Luasa Desert
Heir of Zahra	Riding for trick riding
Ruin Dweller	Lore for ruins
Story Keeper	Lore for Ancient History (start with 5% in Ancient Lore)

EXAMPLE OF CHARACTER CREATION, STEP 6

Kelly's character receives only one of each type of trait, because her character is a ritualist. Looking over the general traits, she selects 'Grave Countenance' as her general trait and takes 'Blessed of Aahote' as her Gerwa-specific trait.

STEP 7: CHARACTER QUESTIONS

Below are eight questions to help you and the Loremaster get to know your character better before the game starts:

- What caused your character to leave the comfort of the community and strike out as a Jackal?
- What causes your Jackal to hesitate on the War Road?
- Who helped your Jackal begin their journey?
- What is the worst possible fate you see for your character?
- What was the first trial your Jackal encountered on the War Road?
- If your character were to lay down their life for something, what would it be?
- What would cause your character to retire from the life of a Jackal?
- Which is more important to your character, power or wisdom?

After answering these questions, the Loremaster gives the character one active and three passive advancements to represent what they learned from the first trial on their path.

With these advancements, a character's starting skills can increase above 75%.

STEP 8: SELECT EQUIPMENT

All Jackals begin with the following items:

- Either
    - › Linen or leather armour; ranged weapon; close combat weapon (2H); and dagger, OR
    - › Linen or leather armour; shield (or close combat weapon (1H)); ranged weapon; close combat weapon (1H); and dagger
- Backpack, two weeks of provisions, 30 feet of rope, waterskin, five torches
- Ritualist gear, if the character is a ritualist
- 3d6 × 10 shekels.

Only characters of specific cultures can start the game with gear possessing a cultural keyword.

EQUIPMENT AND CURRENCY

Taom stared at the Gerwa trader's blanket, which was spread out in the main plaza of Sentem. He squatted next to it, scratching at his thick beard as he scrutinised the trinkets, baubles, and weapons. The trader's shadow moved back and forth on the blanket as he watched Taom. Why wouldn't the man just leave him in peace?

Finally, more to make a choice than having made one, Taom reached out and grabbed the silver necklace with a carving of a tree, made of black wood polished to a warm lustre.

"This one, how much for this one?"

"A good choice, a good choice," the Ger trader murmured. "For you, a single shekel."

Taom grumbled, rising stiffly to his feet. He pulled one of the small leather satchels from his belt, untied it, and let the corners fall. Within sat a few plain silver rings, two with small rubies in them, and several pieces of silver hacked off a bar by Ba-en Nafar the previous night as payment for a sack full of Takan ears. Taom selected the smallest of the pieces and offered it up to the trader.

"My worthy friend. Surely you meant to grab the one next to it. After all, look at the fine craftsmanship of both chain and tree."

Taom glanced again at the necklace, and at the way the dying sun's light caught the branches of the tree. They seemed alive with fire, taking in the sun's light and returning it, blood red. The sound of the trader's voice startled Taom out of his revelry.

"So, we agree?" Silently, Taom nodded and handed the trader the other, larger, piece of silver. It was not until later the next day that he realised he had given the man both shekels.

Jackals live and die by their gear, and measure their success in shekels. Over the course of a Jackal's life, they can expect to see equipment of all qualities, as well as more shekels of silver than the average person sees in their lifetime.

CURRENCY

There are a number of currencies in the Zaharets. The shekel (ss) is the common currency of the land. It does not represent a coin, however. A shekel is a piece of silver, usually hacked from a larger piece or in the form of a piece of jewellery or a ring that weighs about 0.4 oz (11 g). For smaller transactions, the people of the Zaharets often use the copper shekel (cs). A mina (m) of silver is equal to about 50 silver shekels and is 1.25 pounds (0.57 kg). A talent (t) of silver is equal to 3,000 shekels and is 75 pounds (34 kg).

Coins do exist in the region, but primarily as relics from the past. A mouahalan coin (mc), used by the Takan and traders from the east, is a small coin of black metal. Jackals tend to discover and distribute these coins. They are worth about four shekels of silver.

1 ss = 10 cs
1 mc = 4 ss = 40 cs
1 m = 50 ss = 500 cs
1 t = 3,000 ss = 30,000 cs

WEAPONS

Weapons are grouped into categories that help determine how much damage they inflict. The table below lists the damage value for each category, followed by categories of weapons. When using improvised weapons, the Loremaster can assign a weapon category to the improvised item. **Remember that for melee attacks, you add your character's Damage Bonus to the total damage.**

Light melee and ranged weapons have the added advantage of granting +1 Clash Point due to their speed. This is cumulative with the +1 Clash Point from two-weapon fighting, if both weapons are light. Medium melee weapons can be used with two-weapon fighting.

Weapons are either one-handed (1H) or two-handed (2H).

MELEE WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Cost
Unarmed	1d4	0 ss
Light 1H	1d6	10 ss
Medium 1H	1d8	50 ss
Heavy 1H	1d10	100 ss
Light 2H	2d6	120 ss
Heavy 2H	2d8	150 ss

Light 1H weapons: daggers
Medium 1H weapons: clubs, hatchets, leaf-bladed swords, shield bash, stabbing swords, scimitar
Heavy 1H weapons: war axe, spear (1H), khopesh, Melkoni shield bash, sceptres
Light 2H weapons: staff, spear (2H), light chariot blades
Heavy 2H weapons: Gerwa axe, long spear, heavy mace, heavy chariot blades

RANGED WEAPONS

Type	Damage	Cost	Range
Light 1H	1d6	10 ss	20 yards (18 m)
Medium 1H	1d8	50 ss	50 yards (45 m)
Light 2H	1d10	75 ss	75 yards (68 m)
Medium 2H	1d12	150 ss	100 yards (91 m)
Heavy 2H	2d6	200 ss	150 yards (137 m)

Light 1H weapons: daggers, darts, rocks, blow guns
Medium 1H weapons: hatchets, javelins, hand slings
Light 2H weapons: Trauj bow (the only bow that may be used from horseback), staff sling
Medium 2H weapons: self bow
Heavy 2H weapons: Ger bow
Jackals can shoot up to a weapon's range with no penalty. If they shoot beyond that (up to double that range), they take –50% to Ranged Combat.

ARMOUR

Armour provides a simple method to track its effectiveness: Protection. When a character takes damage, they subtract their Protection before applying the damage to Valour or Wounds. There are two types of armours, soft and hard. Soft armours provide less Protection, but are less fatiguing to wear (see page 74).

ARMOUR			
Name	Protection	Type	Cost
Linen/Heavy Robes	1	Soft	50 ss
Leather	2	Soft	100 ss
Scale	3	Hard	1,000 ss
Breastplate	4	Hard	1,500 ss
Bronze Plates	5	Hard	3,000 ss
Shield*	+1	Shield	50 ss
Melkoni Shield**	+2	Shield	200 ss

**Shields require one hand to use. They may be used to shield bash (counts as a medium 1H weapon).*

***Melkoni shields require one hand to use. They may be used to shield bash (counts as a heavy 1H weapon).*

OTHER ITEMS AND SERVICES

GENERAL ITEMS	
Item	Cost
Acalana resin	50 ss
Backpack	5 ss
Bedroll	1 ss
Block and tackle	15 ss
Bottle, clay	2 ss
Candle, 1 hour	1 cs
Chain	40 ss
Climbing gear	25 ss
Craft tools (by trade)	75 ss
Fish hook	2 cs
Fishing gear	15 ss
Flint and tinder	5 cs
Hammer	1 ss
Healer's kit	150 ss
Lock picks	75 ss

GENERAL ITEMS	
Item	Cost
Musical instrument	70 ss
Oil, flask	1 ss
Papyrus, sheet	5 cs
Pole, 10'	1 ss
Quiver	2 ss
Ritualist gear	150 ss
Rope, 30'	10 ss
Sack, large	5 cs
Sack, small	2 cs
Scribe's kit	45 ss
Sling bag	5 cs
Spade	25 ss
Torch	4 cs
Waterskin	5 cs

ANIMALS AND TRANSPORTATION, TABLE 1

Animal or Transport	Cost	Animal or Transport	Cost
Bull	250 ss	Horse, riding	700 ss
Cart	75 ss	Horse, Trauj trained	1,000 ss
Cat	2 ss	Mule	125 ss
Chariot (light)	600 ss	Ox	200 ss
Chariot (heavy)	1200 ss	Pig	50 ss
Cow	150 ss	Saddle and bridle	75 ss
Fowl	1 ss	Sheep	30 ss
Goat	50 ss	Travel (by ship)	1 ss per mile
Hawk	400 ss	Travel (by wagon)	5 ss per mile
Horse, draft	400 ss	Wagon	300 ss

Riding animals and transports have five mechanical considerations: Move, Trample Damage (ignoring Protection), Wounds, and (in the case of chariots) Protection. The Move rate replaces that of the character while using them. Jackals can purchase linen, leather, or scale barding for mounts at twice the cost of purchasing it for a character. Additionally, they can purchase blades for chariot wheelsfor 300ss for 2-wheel chariots or 600 ss for 4-wheel chariots.

ANIMALS AND TRANSPORTATION, TABLE 2

Animal or Transport	Move	Trample Damage	Wounds	Protection
Cart (mule drawn)	10	1d8	15	-
Chariot, two-wheel	18	1d10	25	1
Chariot, four-wheel	13	1d12	30	3
Horse, draft	20	1d8	20	-
Horse, riding	30	1d6	18	-
Horse, Trauj trained	45	1d10	25	-
Mule	15	1d6	15	-

FOOD AND LODGING

Food and Lodging	Cost
Lodging, poor	2 cs
Lodging, average	1 ss
Lodging, superior	5 ss
Food and drink, poor, 1 day	1 cs
Food and drink, average, 1 day	5 cs
Food and drink, superior, 1 day	2 ss
Trail rations, 1 day	5 cs

ENCUMBRANCE

Encumbrance measures the effect of the weight a character's gear has on them. Use the following table to determine a Jackal's encumbrance.

ENCUMBERANCE

Equipment	Encumbrance
Soft armours	1
Hard armours	2
Shields	= Protection
100 coins or fraction thereof	1
Gear	1 for every 10 items
Weapons	Based on weapon damage: 1d6 or 1d8 = 1 1d10 or 1d12 = 2 2d6 or 2d8 = 3

EXAMPLE OF ENCUMBRANCE

Bet is travelling from Ger to Sentem. Checking to see what gear she is carrying, she notes her linen armour (1), two daggers (2), 110 ss (2), and 12 items in her backpack (2). Her encumbrance total is seven.

A Jackal can carry encumbrance up to their Strength with no penalty. If they carry more than that, they lose Clash Points and suffer worse results while travelling per the table below. A character's max encumbrance is equal to (STR x 2).

ENCUMBRANCE PENALTIES

Encumbrance	Clash Point Penalty	Increased Mettle Damage
Up to STR	0	0
Over STR but less than STR × 1.5	–1	+1
STR × 1.5 but less than STR × 2	–2	+2
STR × 2	–3	+3

CHAPTER 4

THE CLASH SYSTEM

The cave spun as Takha-et's vision became like the great river. The Norakan hissed and darted in with the sharpened lion claw it was using as a dagger. The point ripped a line of fire down her arm, and she felt blood soak the linen. Shaking off the first blow to her head, she gritted her teeth to clear her vision. Filth and old blood matted the small creature's fur and stained the teeth that filled its maw. Teeth that gnashed against each other in anticipation of tasting Takha's flesh.

She let out a silent curse to the Six, tightened her grip on her dagger, and waited for her opening. The Norakan darted in once again, and Takha met the beast with upturned blade.

BASIC MECHANICS

Jackals relies on a simple d100 mechanic. Whenever the outcome of a task is called into question, you roll a d100 versus your character's skill. If you roll equal to or lower than your skill value, you succeed; if you roll higher, you fail.

In *Jackals*, when you roll a 91–100%, it is always a failure.

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

Not all situations are equal. Some tasks are inherently easier or more difficult than others. Loremasters may apply modifiers to a Jackal's skill to represent these situations. Modifiers temporarily alter the skill for the duration of the test. A penalty makes the test harder, whereas a bonus makes it easier. Modifiers are applied before the dice are rolled.

DIFFICULTY MODIFIERS

Difficulty	Skill Modifier	What the Modifier Means
Easy	+50%	The task is much easier than usual, and the character should have an almost certain chance of success.
Simple	+25%	The task is simpler than usual, and while success is still by no means certain, the character has a boost to their chance of achieving their goal.
Normal	+0	The skill is unmodified, as normal conditions apply.
Difficult	–25%	The character is significantly hindered in their chance of success.
Hard	–50%	The character suffers a serious setback that may push success beyond their reach.
Extreme	–100%	The character is attempting a feat of legend.

Note that it takes significant changes to base circumstances to apply a modifier to the roll.

OPPOSED ROLLS

There are situations where your character's roll may be opposed by another character's skill. Two Jackals clashing in combat, a chase scene, or trying to remain hidden while a guard looks for you are all examples of this. In such cases, both characters roll against their skill, and the character with the higher successful roll wins.

On the outside chance that both characters roll the same number and succeed, the victor is the character with a higher base skill. If both base skills are equal and a tie occurs, then victory goes to the aggressor.

In all other cases, victory goes to the character who rolls higher on the d100.

RESOLUTION RESULTS

Opponent Player	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	Highest roll wins*	Player wins	Player wins	Player wins
Success	Opponent wins	Highest roll wins	Player wins	Player wins
Failure	Opponent wins	Opponent wins	Neither wins	Neither wins
Fumble	Opponent wins	Opponent wins	Neither wins	Neither wins

*Except in combat, see page 66.

ONE ROLL PER SCENE

There may be times when a Jackal rolls exceptionally well or exceptionally poorly. They or the Loremaster may be tempted to call for a re-roll. However, the 'One Roll Rule' states that Jackals should only make one roll for a particular skill per scene. If they roll well on a Lore or Stealth check, it should carry until the situation changes. If they roll poorly, this too should carry.

This rule protects players who roll well from having their roll negated and prevents constant re-rolls by the player, which may skew the advancement progression and negate the cost of failure.

Stated simply, the One Roll Rule means that Jackals and Loremasters may only call for one check on a skill per scene. The results and value of that check last until the end of the scene, or until a radical shift in scene dynamics allows for a new check. Fate Points, which allow re-rolls, are the exception to this rule (see page 60).

HELPING

There may be times when one Jackal wants to help another one. In this case, the helping Jackal must state how they are helping in the task. The Loremaster provides the limit to how many Jackals can help in a task. Those who are helping 'add' 10% of their skill to the skill of the active roller. This can help simplify rolls where everyone is participating or help characters that have lower skill ratings succeed on skill checks. Only the Jackal who is actively making the roll earns the advancement (see page 105).

A character cannot participate in a skill check and help with a skill check at the same time. If the whole group is rolling Stealth, one Jackal cannot aid others, as they must roll their own check.

EXAMPLE OF HELPING

Nikos is making a Craft roll to create a new spear, but has a Craft skill level of only 35%. Hegnit wants to help with her Craft level of 83%. She adds 10% of her skill level (+8) to Nikos' skill level, bringing it up 43%. If Nikos is successful, he will earn a passive learning check for Craft, but Hegnit will not (see page 105).

CRITICALS AND FUMBLES

There may be moments in the game where your character succeeds beyond their wildest expectations (a critical) or fails in some utterly unexpected way (a fumble). Criticals and fumbles occur any time that the result on the d100 are doubles (that is, 11%, 22%, 33%, 44%, 55%, 66%, 77%, 88%, 99%, or 100% (000 on the dice)). If your roll is a success, meaning you roll under your skill level, it is a critical. If your roll is a failure, it is a fumble.

For skills at or over 100%, 99% becomes a regular failure. A roll of 100% remains a fumble, even if your skill exceeds 100%.

Criticals on skill checks result in additional benefits, such as finishing the task quicker or receiving a greater effect. In cases where a character is allowed to roll a skill check to reduce damage or effect, a critical negates the damage or effect.

Fumbles on skill checks result in additional complications, such as increasing the task time, NPCs noticing the player's actions, or the worst possible outcome of a task. In cases where a character is allowed to roll a skill check to reduce damage or effect, a fumble doubles the damage or effect.

EXAMPLE OF CRITICALS AND FUMBLES

Phamea attempts to use her Craft skill of 35% to cast a new bronze spear head. If she rolls a 33%, it is a critical, as it is a match under her skill level. If she rolls a 44%, this is a fumble, as the match is above her skill level.

Rounding Rule

In *Jackals*, when you must round, you always round down.

Traits

Remember, when you roll a d100 for a skill for which you have a trait, you roll two d10s for the '1s' die and choose the one you want. This increases your chance of a critical, and decreases your chance of a fumble. Jackals can invoke traits as often as they apply.

EXAMPLE OF TRAITS

Bet, the Gerwa thief, is making an Influence roll to try to get some guards to let her into (or out of) jail. She has the Honey-tongued trait, so she rolls a d100 and an additional d10. If she rolls a 42% and a 4, she can choose to use the '4' trait die to get 44% and achieve a critical.

CULTURAL VIRTUE

Your character also possesses a Cultural Virtue, which represents an intrinsic value of their culture. Once per session, you can call upon your Cultural Virtue to increase your level of success, provided you can justify how the Virtue applies. You can turn a fumble into a failure, a failure into a success, or a success into a critical. This is the only way a player may affect a fumble.

EXAMPLE OF CULTURAL VIRTUES

Aldeshi-halan, a Trauj Jackal, has the *Bearer of Ancient Hate* Cultural Virtue. After encountering some Takan, she wishes to find their lair. The Loremaster asks Hannah to roll a Survival check (which Aldeshi-halan has at 65%) to track the Takan back to their lair. Hannah rolls a 67%, which is a failure. Rather than spend a fate point to re-roll, she declares that Aldeshi-halan's hatred drives her forward toward the Takan and invokes her Virtue, turning the Survival check into a success.

FATE POINTS

The forces of Law providentially watch over the world, and those marked as heroes often find fate working with them in the darkest of times. Fate Points represent this force for Jackals.

Each character begins an adventure with three Fate Points. These refresh slowly, only coming back completely at the start of a new adventure. At the start of each session, all Jackals recover 1 Fate Point. You can also recover 1 Fate Point:

- If the Loremaster invokes one of your traits negatively
- For exceptional roleplaying
- For completing an act in the story
- When you complicate the story in some way, by acting in accordance with your traits.

Players can use Fate Points in the following manner:

- To re-roll failed checks (except for fumbles); note you must keep the re-roll
- To re-roll a damage roll (you keep the highest damage roll)
- To add a narrative twist to a scene (per Loremaster approval)
- To invoke a talent that your character does not have (independent of skill rating)
- To prevent death at 0 Wounds; this sets the character to 1 wound and knocks them unconscious. It does not prevent a vicious foe from then striking at them again.

COMBAT

Kalypsis is a world where conflicts often come to a bloody and violent end. The Clash system emulates the style of quick combat found in the Bronze Age myths and stories that inspired Kalypsis. In this setting, heroes can be – and often are – cut down in the prime of their lives, unless fate and the gods smile on them.

FLOW OF COMBAT

The following summary outlines the steps of combat:

1. **Set Valour Points:** all Jackals in the combat set their Valour.
2. **Ambushes:** check for and resolve ambushes.
3. **Initiative:** roll Initiative and establish Initiative order.
4. **Morale:** determine whether any NPCs run away from combat.
5. **Combat rounds:** in Initiative order, characters take turns regaining Clash Points and taking actions.
6. **Combat continues:** if there are enemies left, repeat steps 4 and 5.
7. **Aftermath:** check for scars.

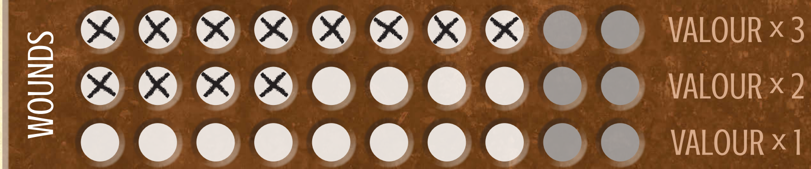
STEP 1: SET VALOUR POINTS

All Jackals set their Valour to their *current* Mettle stat times their unfilled Wound rows. Valour is explained in more detail on page 67.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT, STEP 1

Aldeshi-Halan has a Mettle of 15, and her Wound rows each have eight Wounds in them.

At the start of a combat, assuming she has no lingering wounds, Aldeshi-Halan would begin the flight with 45 Valour [MET x 3 (the number of unfilled Wound rows)]. If she sustains 12 wounds in this fight and is unable to heal them, she will begin the next fight with 30 Valour, as she has one full row of Wounds checked off, leaving only two unfilled rows to multiply against her Mettle stat.



STEP 2: AMBUSHES

There might be times in the game when one side or the other is attempting to ambush its targets before the battle begins. In such cases, the Loremaster should call for a Perception check (remembering traits such as Nose of the Jackal) versus the Stealth skills of the ambushing characters. For groups of enemies, roll once for each group. One ambushing character can take one turn before the Initiative roll for each failed Perception check (limit of one action per ambushing character).

If only a few characters are participating in an ambush, such as two or three Jackals scouting ahead, only they can benefit from the ambush.

Defenders in an ambush cannot spend Clash Points.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT, STEP 2

Neput and Ariston are sneaking up on a group of Norakan to ambush them. Neput has a Stealth of 85% and Ariston has a Stealth of 64%. They roll their Stealth checks versus the group of Norakan with a Common skill group of 45%. The Norakan roll 36%, Neput rolls 54%, and Ariston rolls 16%. With one successful Stealth check, either Neput or Ariston can take an action before the Loremaster calls for Initiative rolls.

STEP 3: INITIATIVE

Once a fight begins, the game shifts to combat rounds. Each round represents about 15 seconds of real time (four rounds = 1 minute). At the start of combat, characters on both sides roll Initiative to reserve a spot for their side in the Initiative order. They do so by rolling a d6 and adding the result to their Deftness. In the case of a tie, NPC slots go before PC slots. Loremasters should only roll for each distinct group of NPCs in a fight, and not for each individual opponent. Each round, when an appropriate slot comes up in the Initiative order, that side can choose who gets to act from whomever has not yet acted that round.

When the last of an NPC type in the combat dies, the highest NPC initiative slot is removed from the Initiative order.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT, STEP 3

Becca, Trisha, Mark, and Kris are fighting a group of Takan that consists of an Oritakan and three Norakan. Each player rolls Initiative (d6 + DEF). Trisha gets a 22, Becca gets a 15, Mark an 11, and Kris a 12. The Loremaster rolls an 18 for the Oritakan and a 15 for the Norakan. The final Initiative order is: PC at 22, NPC at 18, NPC at 15 (NPCs win ties), and PCs at 15, 12, and 11. For the rest of the battle, each round, the players can determine the order in which their characters act when a PC slot comes up, and the Loremaster does the same when an NPC slot comes up.

Eventually, the Jackals slay all the Norakan. When this happens, the Loremaster removes the NPC initiative slot at 18.

STEP 4: MORALE

Few fights in *Jackals* result in the utter destruction of one side. Most creatures, intelligent or otherwise, flee from combat if it is not going well for them. A Morale roll represents a creature's self-preservation instinct.

When a group of NPCs has lost more than 50% of their combatants, the Loremaster makes a Morale roll against the highest Defence (Willpower) in the group of NPCs at the start of the round. This represents the commanding presence of the group's 'leader'. If this roll is successful, the group stays to fight; otherwise, they retreat.

On a critical, that NPC or NPC group does not need to make another Morale roll for the rest of the combat.

After suffering losses of 75%, the NPCs must make this check again; however, this time, each individual group of NPCs must make the check. No leader, no matter how commanding, can force the individual groups to stay in the fight at this point.

Fleeing in this case might involve retreating from combat. However, it might also take the form of a controlled flight to a more advantageous position, where the enemy can regroup with other forces and attack the Jackals again. Loremasters should take the NPCs' situational awareness into account in such situations.

These rules are also meant to show Jackals that not all fights are to the death. Perhaps, seeing that their enemies will run, they too will begin to flee when combat begins to turn against them.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT, STEP 4

A group of Jackals is clearing out a Takan camp composed of 12 Norakan, three Mavakan, and one Oritakan. The fight goes well for the Jackals, and soon eight of the Norakan and a Mavakan lie dead. Because this is over 50% of the initial group, it triggers a Morale check at the start of the round. Looking at the Defence skills for the Takan, Becca sees that the Norakan possess 45%, the Mavakan possess 55%, and the Oritakan possesses 70%. She rolls a 53% against the Oritakan's 70% Defence, which means the Takan are still in the fight! However, two rounds later, only two Norakan, one Mavakan, and the Oritakan still remain. At this point, again at the start of the round, Becca must roll against each group's Defence. She rolls:

Norakan: 67%
Mavakan: 54%
Oritakan: 80%.

At this point, the Norakan and the Oritakan must use their actions to flee, while the Mavakan will act as usual.

STEP 5: COMBAT ROUNDS

Starting with the first entry and descending in Initaitve order, each character gets a chance to act. During PC slots, any Jackal who has not acted already this round may do so. During NPC slots, all NPCs in a distinct group may act.

On their turn, a character first regenerates all their Clash Points, up to their Clash Point total. Note that their Clash Point total may be modified by their fighting style (page 66) and encumberance (page 55).

They may then move and take an action. Usually, a character's action is to attack, but they may instead use it to challenge an opponent, move further, dodge, or do some other complex action.

During their turn, characters may spend Clash Points to take minor actions, in addition to their normal action, and improve the actions they take.

Move

Each time a character moves, they can move up to their Move value in yards. A character may spend two Clash Points or use their action to move up to their Move value once more, or do both to sprint (move three times).

If a character moves away from an enemy, that enemy may spend a Clash Point to make a free attack against the character. The moving character may not spend a Clash Point to defend against this attack. A character may, however, use their action to 'Dodge' as they move away from an enemy. This turns the enemy's free attack into a Clash (see below).

Action: Attack

Jackals make attacks with the appropriate Martial skill. The character, on their turn, targets a legal target with their attack action (the character must be within reach for a melee attack, or within range for a ranged attack). They then make a skill check using the appropriate Martial skill. If they roll equal to or less than their skill percentage they hit their target. However, most times, the target will want to fight back! When attacked, the target can declare they are fighting back by spending 1 Clash Point and turning the attack into a Clash between the characters. Both characters roll their appropriate Combat skills, and the winner inflicts damage on the loser. This means your characters might not damage their opponent with a successful attack! If both characters succeed, the one who rolled the highest number wins.

If both characters roll the same number to hit, the character with the highest skill rating wins. In the rare case of a tie between two combatants of the same skill rating, the tie goes to the aggressor (in this case, the attacker).

In the rare case where both characters score a critical, both characters suffer the full effects of the criticals. This rare case can create a situation where both characters die. This rule supersedes the generic Clash rule of highest critical wins.

If an opponent has no remaining Clash Points, the character taking the action is the only one who makes attack rolls. The defender is hit on a successful check.

Making ranged attacks in melee combat is dangerous. To represent the focus required to do so, all characters within melee range of a character who makes a ranged attack – save for the target of the ranged attack – can spend a Clash Point to make a simultanious attack on the character making the ranged attack.

Special Rules for Fighting Styles

In *Jackals,* there are three main melee combat styles: weapon and shield, two-weapon, and two-handed weapon. Each has their own strengths and weaknesses:

- **Weapon and Shield** – When wielding a shield, characters can spend a Clash Point to use their Melee Combat skill in place of their Dodge skill when targeted by ranged attacks.
- **Two-Weapon** – This style employs the use of a weapon in each hand, enabling the combatant to react more quickly to opponents. When fighting with two medium-sized weapons or smaller, the character gains +1 Clash Point.
- **Two-Handed Weapon** – This style sacrifices speed for damage. All two-handed weapons deal increased damage (which is already factored into their stats), but the character wielding them suffers –1 Clash Point due to the weapon's weight.

Fighting with a single, one-handed weapon has no bonus or penalty associated with it.

Damage

When a character wins a Clash, or succeeds at an opposed check, they roll damage. Damage is based on the weapon used – and, in the case of melee attacks, a character's Damage Bonus increases their weapon damage. Armour reduces the amount of damage taken from the attack by its Protection value, before the damage is applied to a character's Valour or Wounds. This is true even in the case of a critical hit.

Criticals and Fumbles in Combat

Criticals and fumbles are special situations. When a character critically hits another character or fumbles a defence roll, the attack deals maximum damage to the character. Protection still applies to the damage.

In the case of a critical hit versus a fumble, the blow ignores Protection when it is applied, and the character who scored the critical gains a Fate Point. A Jackal, on their turn, can spend Clash Points to launch a Power Attack after they score a critical to automatically increase their damage by six points (see page 66).

In the rare case where both characters score a critical hit, both characters suffer the full effects of the criticals, as if their opponent had fumbled. The Fate Point awarded for the critical is only is gained in this case if the Jackal and/or NPC survives the attack! This rare case can create a situation where both characters die. This rule supersedes the generic Clash rule of highest critical wins.

CLASH RESULTS

Opponent Player	Critical	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical	Both characters take maximum damage, which ignores Protection, and gain a Fate Point if they survive	Player inflicts maximum damage	Player inflicts maximum damage	Player inflicts maximum damage, which ignores Protection, and gains a Fate Point
Success	Opponent inflicts maximum damage	Highest roll inflicts damage	Player inflicts damage	Player inflicts maximum damage
Failure	Opponent inflicts maximum damage	Opponent inflicts damage	Neither wins	Neither wins
Fumble	Opponent inflicts maximum damage, which ignores Protection, and gains a Fate Point	Opponent inflicts maximum damage	Neither wins	Neither wins

EXAMPLE OF CRITICALS AND FUMBLES IN COMBAT

A Mavakan warrior wins a Clash against Bet with a critical hit. It normally rolls a d10 + 1d4 for damage, so it inflicts 14 points of damage. Bet's leather armour reduces this damage by 2. Bet applies 12 points of damage to her Valour.

If Bet had fumbled her roll, she would not be able to apply her Protection, so would take 14 points of damage to her Valour, and the Mavakan would gain a Fate Point.

Valour and Wounds

Each character in *Jackals* has two stats that measure their ability to stand and fight: Valour and Wounds.

Valour represents your character's fighting spirit, martial prowess, and luck. These represent near misses, painful but not life-threatening bruises, and the like. After each combat, assuming the character has a chance to take a breath and is not Wounded, they recover all their Valour Points. Taking a breath usually requires five minutes of wound binding, resting, or other low-effort actions. **Always subtract any damage suffered from a Jackal's Valour Points first.**

Wounds represent those enemy strikes that have a real chance of killing a character. Characters begin with three rows of wounds. **Damage taken after a character's Valour drops to zero is subtracted from Wounds**. For each full row of Wounds taken, a character's ability to recover Valour decreases. After the third row is filled (i.e., the Jackal is reduced to zero Wounds), the character is dead, unless they are able to spend a Fate Point to stay alive. Wounds are not recovered as quickly as Valour, so the effects of Wounds linger even after combat ends.

Using a Fate Point to Avoid Death

If a character is reduced to zero Wounds, they are dead. If the player has a remaining Fate Point, they can spend it to save their character. Fate intervenes, and the killing blow merely appears to be fatal. The character is barely alive, with 1 Wound remaining. They are unconscious for the remainder of the combat, or until another character heals them above 1 Wound. In most cases, enemies ignore the unconscious character, however, spending this Fate Point does not prevent enemies from capturing the fallen Jackal. Especially rapacious or vicious foes, such as the Atakan, will continue to attack and consume the body of the fallen Jackal to ensure they are dead. If the fallen character suffers any damage while in this state, they must spend an additional Fate Point to survive.

Healing

Jackals recover all Valour between fights, as long as they can spend 5 minutes binding their wounds and resting. Wounds are trickier to heal. For each day of bed rest – doing nothing but resting and light activity – a character recovers 1d4 Wounds. A successful Healing check allows a +3 bonus to heal Wounds. Jackals can also use acalana resin, a potent alchemical poultice, once per day to heal 1d6 Wounds instantly. Some magical traditions possess rites that can heal Wounds at a faster rate.

Each character can only benefit from one Healing check per night. Multiple attempts have no additional effects. This means that if the first check is a failure, another character cannot try to treat that Wound again.

METTLE

A Jackal's Mettle represents their endurance and will to fight. It factors into their Valour score at the start of each fight. Mettle is not a static thing. Many situations along the War Road can sap a Jackal's Mettle, reducing their effectiveness over the course of the adventure. Fatigue is the primary way a Jackal's Mettle is reduced (see page 74), but it can also be sapped through environmental effects (see page 159). At the start of each fight, a Jackal must use their current Mettle to calculate their Valour.

Should an effect reduce a Jackal's Mettle to zero, they immediately fall unconscious due to shock. They remain comatose for 24 hours minus their Vitality score. When they awaken, they remain at zero Mettle (should they enter a fight, they have zero Valour) until they rest again.

Recovering lost Mettle requires a full day of rest, with no travelling, stress, or engagements with others. At the end of the day, the Jackal makes an Endurance check (modified by the terrain modifer, see page 74). They recover 1 point on a failure, 1d4 points on a success, and four points on a critical. If the character fumbles this Endurance check, their system goes into shock, and they collapse again. They will die within 1 hour unless successfully treated with a Healing check. Loremasters should only allow one Healing check in this situation.

Action: Break Materials

The time may come when a Jackal wants to break something. Perhaps it stands in their way, like a prison door, chest, or gate. They must make an Athletics or Melee Combat check to attempt to break it. Many materials require multiple rolls to fully break them. A successful check counts as damaging the material. However, a failure or fumble, damaging the material can reduce the Jackal's Mettle (the first number) and cause Wounds (the second number). Multiple Jackals can make the check to break the material more quickly.

Using a tool (improvised or not) gives the Jackal a trait on the check and negates the Wounds from a failure (but not a fumble).

See the table below for the statistics on each type of material.

BREAKING MATERIALS

Material	Difficulty	Successes Needed	Failure Result	Fumble Result
Wood	Normal	1	1	2
Clay bricks	Normal	2	2	3
Stone	Difficult	3	3/1	4/2
Bronze	Hard	4	3/1	4/2
Iron	Hard	5	4/1	5/2

Note that magical materials – such as hestul and mouahalan – cannot be broken or sundered without specific rites and rituals.

Action: Challenge

There may be times when a character wishes to distract or taunt an opponent into focusing on them. Jackals usually do this to protect the other party members from an opponent that has a high skill or deals a massive amount of damage. Should a character wish to taunt an opponent, they must make an opposed Deception, Influence, or Perform roll versus the opponent's Willpower. If they succeed, the Clash Point cost to react to anyone but the challenging character is increased. This effect lasts until the end of the challenging character's next turn. The Challenge Results table shows the increased Clash Point cost.

CHALLENGE RESULTS

Challenger	Clash Point Cost
Success	+1 Clash Point
Success versus fumble	+2 Clash Points
Critical	+2 Clash Points
Critical versus fumble	+3 Clash Points

Clash Points

Each character begins play with a specific number of Clash Points, and regains any Clash Points they spend at the start of their turn. Jackals and NPCs can use Clash Points to turn an unopposed attack roll into a Clash. Characters also use them to attempt to Dodge a ranged attack. When an enemy charges into melee, characters equipped with ranged attacks can use a Clash Point to Clash with the charging enemy.

A character can use Clash Points to take simple or minor actions on their turn without sacrificing their main action. This includes spell casting, switching weapons, picking something up, etc. See the table below for the Clash Point costs of reactions and minor actions.

CLASH POINT COSTS

Name	Type	Clash Point Cost
Clash with a melee attack	Reaction	1
Dodge a ranged attack	Reaction	1
Clash a charging enemy with a ranged attack	Reaction	1
Helping (see page 58)	Minor action	1
Invoking a rite	Minor action	Varies per rite
Moving an additional distance equal to the character's Move value	Minor action	2
Opening/closing a door	Minor action	1
Picking up an item	Minor action	1
Retrieving an item from a pack	Minor action	2
Striking while blinded, in total darkness, or against an invisible target	Minor action	+3 to the action/reaction
Standing from prone	Minor action	3
Switching weapons	Minor action	1

A character can also use Clash Points to improve their attacksby applying one of the effects below after the outcome of the roll is determined. They may apply one of the following effects each round by spending the indicated number of Clash Points.

IMPROVED ACTION EFFECTS

Name	Type	Clash Point Cost	Effect
Power Attack	Melee	2	Damage is increased by +1d6
Precise Blow	Melee	2	+5% to Melee Combat or Unarmed Combat skill (allowing a character to hit if they miss their skill check by 5%)
Sweeping Arc	Melee	2	If an attack hits, also deal half damage to one adjacent target.
Sweeping Arc II	Melee	3	If an attack hits, also deal half damage to two adjacent targets.
Overdraw	Ranged	2	Damage is increased by +1d6
Precise Aim	Ranged	2	+5% to Ranged Combat skill (allowing a character to hit if they miss their skill check by 5%)
Rapid Fire	Ranged	2	If an attack hits, attack another target (making a separate roll)

STEP 6: COMBAT CONTINUES

After every character takes their actions, if there are still opposing forces, repeat steps 4 and 5 until one side is defeated or runs away.

STEP 7: AFTERMATH

When characters fight in *Jackals*, they do not walk away unscathed. If a character suffers a lot of Wounds, they might bear the scar of that battle for the rest of their life. After any combat where a Jackal suffers one or more Wounds, if their entire first row of Wounds is filled, they must roll for scarring. To do so, they should roll a d100, add any applicable modifiers, and consult the table below:

- Filled one or more Wounds in the second row (+10%)
- Filled all Wounds in the second row (+10%)
- Filled one or more Wounds in the third row (+10%)
- Three or fewer Wounds remaining (+5%)
- Two or fewer Wounds remaining (+5%)
- Only 1 Wound remaining (+5%)
- Damage inflicted with magic (+5%)
- Damage inflicted with flame (+10%)
- Damage inflicted by a particularly brutal enemy (+10%)

All of the above modifiers are cumulative.

If a Jackal is scarred, the player should work with their Loremaster to establish what kind of scar this represents.

SCARRING	
Roll	Result
Up to 50%	Fate be praised, no lasting scars
51–75%	**Minor scarring**: no lasting effect, but it is a physical reminder of this battle.
76–100%	**Major scarring**: –1 to Mettle, permanently. The old wound bothers the character for the rest of their life.
101–115%	**Massive scarring**: –2 to Mettle, permanently. Additionally, they gain a negative trait for all Influence rolls for pleasant social interactions. If the scar looks particularly fearsome, it can count as a trait for Influence for intimidation.
116–130%	**Minor impairment**: –2 to Mettle, permanently. Additionally, the character's hand, foot, or ear is permanently damaged, which counts as a negative trait.
131–145%	**Major impairment**: –2 to Mettle and –1 Wound per row, permanently. The character's arm, leg, or eye is permanently damaged. Arm: counts as a negative trait and another –1d6 to Mettle. Leg: counts as a negative trait and –1d3 to Clash Point total. Eye: counts as a negative trait and –20% to Perception.
145%+	**Limb severed**: –2 to Mettle and –1 Wound per row, permanently. The character permanently loses an arm, leg, or eye. Arm: counts as a negative trait, another –1d6 to Mettle, and –10% to all Martial skills. Leg: counts as a negative trait, –1d3 to Clash Point total, and cannot walk without the aid of a crutch. Eye: counts as a negative trait and –40% to Perception.

EXAMPLE OF COMBAT, STEP 7

Bet was in an intense fight where she suffered several Wounds. After it is over, she must roll for scarring. She has filled in Wounds in her third row, which means she adds the first three modifiers for +30% to her roll. She suffered damage from a Flaming Spirit, which is both magical (+5%) and flaming (+10%), so her total modifier is +45%.

She rolls a 66%, which results in 111% with the modifier – massive scaring. Her player and the Loremaster decide together that Bet suffered burns that stretch across her arms, neck, and face. Bet permanently reduces her Mettle by two, and now has a negative trait for most Influence rolls. However, the scar might play to her advantage as a positive trait when using Influence to intimate someone.

TRAVEL

Travel along the War Road is dangerous and exhausting. The settlements are few and far between, Takan prowl the woods and mountains, and strange creatures threaten travellers. Most people travel as part of a caravan or other large group, seeking safety in numbers. Jackals often need to get from one point to another quickly, and it takes a toll on their Endurance.

Jackals handles journeys through travel checks. A travel check is a Survival check that represents a character's ability to survive the rigours of travel, and determines what shape they are in when they arrive.

TRAVEL CHECKS

When the characters prepare to take a journey, they should explain to the Loremaster where they intend to travel. The Loremaster determines how long the journey will take the group, and informs them how many travel rolls it requires. This usually equates to one travel check per 2 days of travel or fraction thereof. The travel check is a Survival check modified by the travel difficulty of the terrain in which they are travelling (see table below). All travelling Jackals need to make the Survival check and consult the Travel Checks table below.

TRAVEL CHECKS	
Survival Check Result	**Effect**
Critical	The character is so well-prepared or hardy that they are able to aid their fellow Jackals on the journey. The Jackal can reduce another character's Mettle damage by half.
Success	The character is well-prepared for the journey and makes it to their destination with no difficulty.
Failure	The trip was difficult for the character and takes its toll on them. They suffer Mettle damage equal to terrain type.
Fumble	The trip is a slog for the character and an extreme tax on their physical resources. The Mettle damage is increased with a fumble.

Additionally, there is a 1 in 10 chance per failed travel roll (a fumble counts as two) that an encounter might occur. This effect is cumulative. So, if three Jackals fail their roll, there is a 3 in 10 chance of an encounter (see page 197).

EFFECTS OF FATIGUE

Should a character fail a travel roll, they suffer damage to their Mettle score that represents the drain of travel. The penalty remains in effect until a character returns to a bastion of Law, such as a town or city. One night of rest in a bastion removes one point of Mettle damage. Rites, magical effects, and other supernatural effects might affect fatigue, as well.

Each terrain type has a different difficulty level and associated Mettle damage. Some terrain types inflict Corruption damage, as well. The table below shows the difficulty and effects of failed and fumbled travel checks.

TRAVEL DIFFICULTY AND DAMAGE			
Terrain Type	**Difficulty**	**Failure**	**Fumble**
Coast	Simple	1	2
Plains	Normal	2	4
Mountains	Difficult	3	6
Wastes	Hard	3 and 1d4 Corruption	6 and 1d6 Corruption
Desert	Hard	3	6
Forest	Difficult	3	6

Remember that a Jackal's Mettle damage from travelling is increased if their Encumbrance is above their Strength.

ENCUMBERANCE PENALTIES	
Encumbrance	Increased Mettle Damage
Up to STR	0
Over STR but less than STR × 1.5	+1
STR × 1.5 but less than STR × 2	+2
STR × 2	+3

EXAMPLE OF TRAVEL

Nikos travels from Sentem to Densom to carry an urgent message for Sari Avi. Nikos has Strength 12, Encumbrance 15, Mettle 16, and is unwounded. He makes a Survival check, modified by the plains' difficulty (+0%). Nikos fails his Survival roll. The Loremaster informs Nikos' player that the cost for failing in the plains is 2, but because Nikos' Encumbrance exceeds Strength, he takes an iadditional point of Mettle damage! Therefore, Nikos' Mettle is reduced to 13. Unfortunately, a pack of Norakan attacks him on the way to Densom. When he calculates his starting Valour Points for the fight, he uses his current, reduced Mettle score, so he starts the combat with 39 Valour Points instead of his normal 48. Assuming he survives, he may need to spend several days in Densom to recover his lost Mettle. Sadly, Sari Avi needs to send a return message immediately...

CHAPTER 5

RITES

Phamea saw Takha-et gut the Norakan out of the corner of her eye. While that one slid to the cavern floor, dead, there were still a dozen Rapiuma, summoned by the Takan's dark rituals, moving in to surround them. Phamea held her hand up higher, casting Alwain's light throughout the cavern. It shone warm and pure, as if the sun lit this place deep beneath the earth. But it was not enough. The shambling dead did not fear the light, and Phamea knew her Jackals needed a moment to regroup before facing this new terror.

Phamea pressed the butt of her staff against the ground and knelt down next to it. The sounds of the grunting Takan, the clashing bronze, and the rasping rattle of the dead fell away. There was only the peace of the knowledge of Alwain. Breathing in, she whispered the words from the Shalapher.

"For my faithful, I will be a hedge of bronze and a wall of iron. Those who forsake my light will be forsaken by me."

The words formed the end of the rite, and Phamea felt Alwain's Law flow from her in a widening circle. The dead howled and beat against the empty air but could move no closer.

"Hurry. Finish the beasts and ready your hearts and weapons. This day, Chaos will fall to the faithful."

Magic in *Jackals* is not a product of innate ability or some secret divine spark. Some magic is the result of a pact between entities of the spiritual realm and beings of the mortal one. Every time a ritualist works a ritual, they tap into their relationship with entities beyond their ken. Whether it is a Kahar of Alwain who trained in the rites and Laws of her order, trusting in Alwain's perfect word and Laws, or a Mouathenic calling upon the dark spirits of the Rathic to heed his call, each magical rite draws on power from the spiritual side of the world.

Other magic taps into the Law of the world. The current residents of the Zaharets say the elder peoples were beings that did not reside fully in the mortal realm. They possessed some of the spiritual realm; and, as such, they were able to sing fragments of the songs of creation. These fragmentary verses tapped into the Laws and lays of creation established at the dawn of the world, allowing them to produce potent changes within the natural world. The Hasheers of Luathi search through the ruins of the Zaharets for fragments of these spell songs and lays of invocation, to better understand their power. But the Hasheers are dwarfs among the ruins of giants, and their ceremonies are but a pale reflection – and a misunderstood translation – of the spell songs of old.

While Alwain and his Laws are perfect, the gods and ancestors are mighty, and the Rathic are powerful, humanity is none of these things. Often, their rites fail, straining or breaking the relationship between man and the spirit world. When this happens, the ritualist must take propitiatory actions to restore the relationship and connection with the spirit realm.

Magic is not neutral. It is part of the world, draws on powers from the spiritual realm, and possesses an alignment. Hasheers speak of colours or shades of magic, while the Kahar of Alwain speak of Light, Shadow, and Darkness. Light magic works with and reinforces the order and Laws of Alwain. Shadow magic attempts to control the Law of nature, but is not necessarily corruptive unless the ritualist uses it in a way that violates the Laws of the world (e.g., by killing a lawful entity). Finally, twisted magic is inherently corruptive and condemned by most people, for it calls upon those entities that stand in opposition to the Law in this world.

TRADITIONS BY CULTURE

Each character that learns to access the spiritual realm usually does so through the rites, rituals, and paradigms of their cultures. What this means in practical terms is that each culture has different traditions by which they approach supernatural rites. The one tradition that is bound by no culture is the Twisted Path.

MOUATHENI: THE TWISTED PATH

The path of Corruption is open to all. It is a path of darkness and of ice. The spirits that offer up the power of Chaos are indiscriminate. Those who follow this path seek only to sow the seeds of Chaos and Corruption, to serve up the land of the Zaharets to their masters. Any who search can find the lore of Mouatheni: in the lost works of Keta and Mouadah, in the whispers of madness that come in the night, or through communion with the Rathic. All are willing to share the darkness that consumes them. The powers this path grants are those of Corruption, ice, domination, and binding. However, walking the Twisted Path often leads to a loss of connection to the rites of other traditions. See the 'Corruption' section of the book for what happens when this loss occurs (page 151).

HOW RITES WORK

Rites are the ceremonies the ritualist calls upon to make changes to the world around them. Each rite represents a covenant between the ritualist and the source of their power. Hence, one can only invoke rites of their own tradition and those of the Twisted Path. The ritualist must also possess the ceremonial tools of their trade, which represent the physical aspects of their covenant, to invoke their rites. Only the most powerful may eschew these tools, for they have created a lasting and abiding connection with the other side.

Mechanically, rites function like skills. Each time a character wishes to use a rite, the ritualist must invoke the rite by making a skill check. This check represents not only the knowledge of the rite, but also the character's ability to maintain their connection to their spiritual benefactor. Additionally, most rites require a cost in Clash Points (CP) and Devotion Points (DP).

Should the skill check succeed, the ritualist invokes their rite! Should it fail, the character loses only half the Clash Points and 1 Devotion Point of the spell, as the other side does not hear or heed their call. They may not attempt another rite this turn when this happens. Should they fumble a rite check, not only do they lose the full amount of Clash Points and Devotion Points, but they also lose access to that rite until they can make the appropriate sacrifices and prayers (usually for the rest of the day).

Note that invoking a rite does not use an action unless the rite specifically states it. Jackals only spend the Clash Point cost for their rites when they invoke the rite during combat. This represents the ritualist's inability to completely focus on the physical world while they negotiate their spiritual bargains.

Ritualists recover all Devotion Points after a night of rest.

BLOOD MAGIC: THE FORBIDDEN WAY

A Mouathenic can spend Wounds in place of Devotion or Corruption Points when invoking a rite. Each Wounds inflicted (which ignores Valour) converts to 1 Devotion Point for a Mouatheni rite. They can bleed themselves or others. Victims must be helpless for a Mouathenic to bleed them for their Devotion Points.

RITES BY TRADITION

Each tradition has specific rites, which only practitioners of that tradition can learn. Below we list the most common rites by tradition using the same format for each.

Location to Learn: Jackals cannot learn all rites in all areas of the Zaharets. To learn new rites, a ritualist must often travel to a specific place.
Devotion Points: how many Devotion Points a Jackal must expend or reserve to invoke the rite. Note that some rites reserve Devotion Points (denoted by the r). This allows the ritualist to invoke the rite beforehand and store its powers until needed. This reserved Devotion does not regenerate until after the rite is used or discarded.
Clash Point Cost: the cost of the spell in Clash Points during combat.
Tradition: the rite's tradition and shade (Light, Shadow, or Darkness)
Range: the rite's maximum range.
Duration: how long the rite lasts. A ritualist can sustain some rites over multiple intervals if it has a duration of 'sustained'. The ritualist must pay the rite's cost at the end of each interval or the rite ends.
Effect: what effect the rite has on the world or target.
Critical: what happens if ritualist rolls a critical on the invocation.
Defence: if a target can defend against the rite's affect, this defines the skill for the opposed skill check.
Save Effect: an invoked rite is always effective. A successful defence check allows the target to suffer this lesser version of the rite.
Advancements: list of any specific advancements associated with the rite.

LUATHI RITES

Kahar

The Kahar are the priests and priestesses of Alwain, who follow in the traditions laid down by Shumma 150 years ago. They call upon the light of Alwain and his Law to aid their allies and communities.

Balm of the Kahar

All Luathi grow up hearing the stories of Shumma and Alwain, and how Alwain granted his prophetess the ability to heal the most grievous wounds the Takan lash inflicted. Kahars learn that they are vessels of that power. Calling upon the Light of Law, the Kahar can touch an ally's wounds and close them.

BALM OF THE KAHAR			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Alwain in Ameena Noani or Temple of the Morning Lord in Sentem		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Kahar (Light)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	Instant		
Effect			
The target heals 1d8 wounds			
Critical:	If the normal effect does not heal a full row of wounds, heal the entire row.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Champion of Law: the Kahar can restore 4d6 Valour instead of Wounds. *The Light Spreads*: the Kahar can heal additional targets with this rite for +2 DP per target.			

Light of Dawn

The light of the sun is an oft-used metaphor for the Law of Alwain. The Kahar can use their knowledge of the Law of Alwain to manifest that metaphor physically. The Kahar's right hand begins to glow with an intense white light – or perhaps their left hand, in the event that the right is missing. The light, however, always rests in the hands of the Kahar; for as the psalm says, *"you will grant your Law into the hands of your chosen."*

LIGHT OF DAWN			
Location to Learn:	Any Temple of Alwain		
Devotion Points:	1	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Kahar (Light)	Range:	10 yards
Duration:	Sustained; 1-minute interval		
Effect			
The Kahar's hand begins to glow with a bright white light, which is considered a brightly lit area out to 10 yards, and dim light for an additional 10 yards.			
Critical:	The rite costs 0 DP		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Absolute Light: the range of this rite is now 20 yards.			

Forbiddance

The power of the Law can hold those who are antithetical to it at bay. The Kahar channels their faith and belief in Alwain into an invisible – but potent – barrier which can resist those who bear the stain of Corruption or those that would oppose Alwain.

FORBIDDANCE			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Alwain or Temple of the Morning Lord in Sentem		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost**:	All
Tradition:	Kahar (Light)	Range:	10-foot circle
Duration:	Sustained; 1-round interval		
Effect			
By striking their staff upon the earth, a Kahar can prevent all Undead, Rathic, Skessh, and those with Corruption 12 or higher from entering the circle.			
Critical:	The circle also imposes a penalty to equal to twice the invoker's Devotion to ranged attacks and rites made by those affected by Forbiddance.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
My Faith is Strong: increase the sustained interval to two rounds. *Power of Purity*: Forbiddance now affects those with Corruption 9 or higher.			

Touch of Law

The hands of the Kahar are the hands of Alwain in Kalypsis. By touching a corrupted creature, the Kahar can scorch them with the power of Law, causing the creature's skin to blister and burn. A Kahar should be certain of its effect, however, as touching untainted people with the Touch of Law is considered a grave insult.

TOUCH OF LAW			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Alwain in Sentem or Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost:**	2
Tradition:	Kahar (Light)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	Instant (takes an action)		
Effect			
This rite inflicts damage equal to half the creature's Corruption score. A creature that is suppressing their Corruption is immune to this effect, unless the Jackal scores a critical.			
Critical:	The damage is increased to the creature's full Corruption score and ignores Protection.		
Defence:	Endurance	Save Effect:	Damage is halved
Advancements			
None			

Hasheer

The Hasheers of Ameena Noani are scholars who delve into the past to understand how the world works. They work for the betterment of all Luathi, in theory, although some selfishly hoard their knowledge. Through their understanding of the fundamental Laws of the world, Hasheers invoke supernatural effects in the world around them.

See the Unseen

Nothing remains unnoticed by the Hasheer's eye, even that which is hidden or invisible. Through this rite, the Hasheer begins to see the patterns hidden objects leave in the world. This rite reveals that which is hidden in the Hasheer's direct line of sight.

SEE THE UNSEEN			
Location to Learn:	Orsem Yahan or Scriptorium in Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	6	**Clash Point Cost:**	3
Tradition:	Hasheer (Shadow)	Range:	100 feet
Duration:	5 minutes		
Effect			
The rite reveals hidden doors, scripts, and the like to the Hasheer.			
Critical:	The rite costs 0 DP and reveals all Rathic in the area.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Grant Visions: the Hasheer can extend their supernatural sight to additional targets at the cost of 1 DP per target.			

Understand the Tongues of Men and Beasts

Hasheers believe all creatures, men and beasts, once spoke in the same tongue. For a brief moment, the Hasheer hears all in the original language. The Hasheer is able to understand all languages "spoken" within the range of the rite.

UNDERSTAND THE TONGUES OF MEN AND BEASTS			
Location to Learn:	Scriptorium in Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	5	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Hasheer (Light)	Range:	100 yards
Duration:	1 hour		
Effect			
The rite provides perfect translation of what humanoid creatures are saying, and conveys simple concepts for animals.			
Critical:	The rite costs 0 DP.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Grant Knowledge: the Hasheer can extend the supernatural understanding to allies at the cost of 1 DP per target. *The Words of the Mouth and the Meditation of the Eyes*: the Hasheer may also read all languages while this rite is in effect.			

Crack of Flame

The ancient lore tells of a powerful invocation that summoned gouts of flame into the conjurer's hands. No Child of Bronze has been able to produce so grand an effect. While they cannot produce the flame, the Hasheer can produce a flash.

CRACK OF FLAME			
Location to Learn:	Orsem Yahan or Scriptorium in Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost**:	3
Tradition:	Hasheer (Shadow)	Range:	6 yards
Duration:	2 combat rounds		
Effect			
The Hasheer slams the heel of their staff or boot on the ground and sends up a blinding flash. All enemies within the range of the rite suffer a penalty to all non-defence skills equal to twice the Hasheer's Devotion.			
Critical:	The penalty is increased to three times the Hasheer's Devotion.		
Defence:	Endurance	Save Effect:	Penalty and duration are halved
Advancements			
The Heat of the Flame: all targets also take 1d8 damage from the heat of the flash, which ignores Protection.			

Path of the Moons

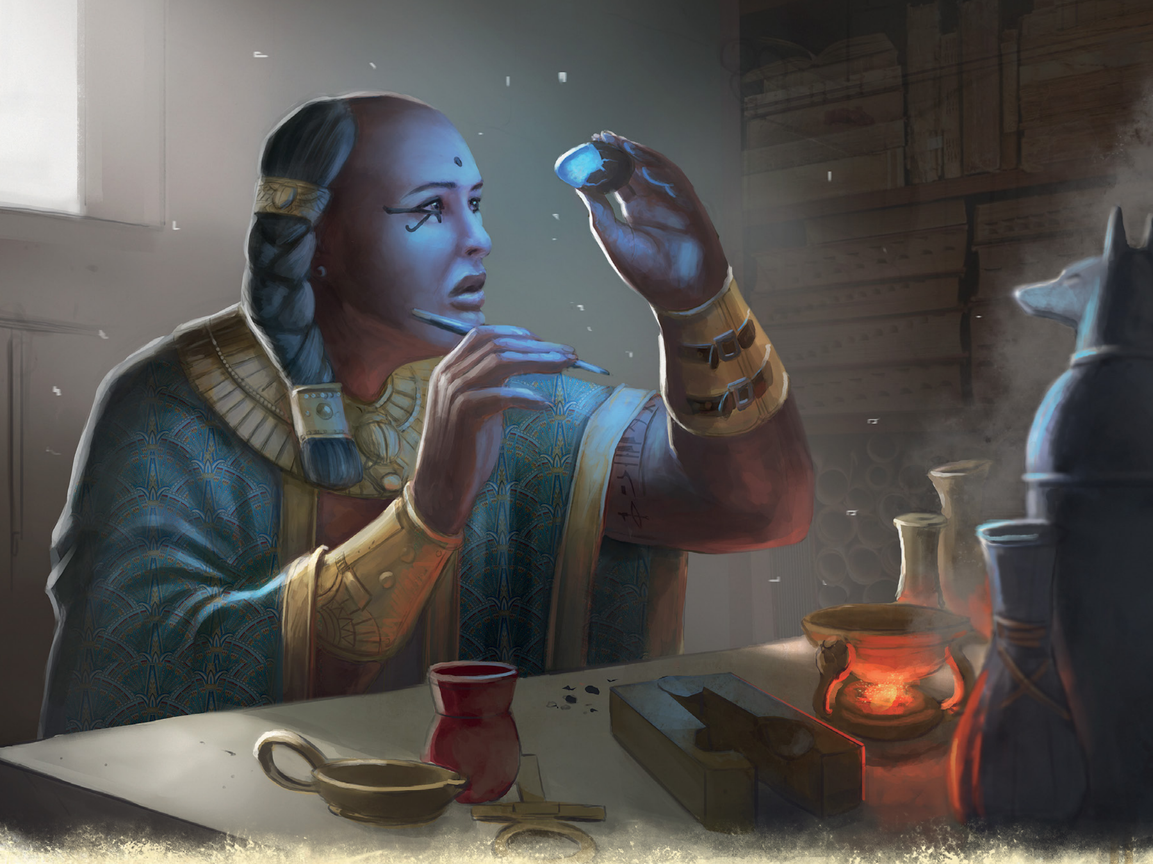
The Hasheers of Ameena Noani learned this rite from an old tomb in the Vori Wastes. An unknown hand inscribed a frieze that displayed strange humanoids descending from what appeared to be five moons. What little they could understand led to this rite, which calls upon the aspects of the three moons of Kalypsis' sky.

PATH OF THE MOONS			
Location to Learn:	Orsem Yahan or Scriptorium in Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	2 per ally/target	**Clash Point Cost**:	3
Tradition:	Hasheer (Shadow)	Range:	7 yards
Duration:	Kauma and Gai: two rounds Oura: instant		
Effect			
When invoking this rite, choose one of the following effects. The Hasheer does not count as an ally for these rites. Kauma: the red moon of war heartens the Hasheer's allies. They gain +1 Clash Point and a bonus to combat skills equal to the Hasheer's Devotion. Gai: the green moon of abundance strengthens the Hasheer's allies. The strength of the earth flows into them, granting +2 Protection. Oura: the silver moon of purity pours forth from the eyes and mouth of the Hasheer, scourging their foes. Targets with Corruption take damage equal to half the Hasheer's Devotion. Certain effects of this rite are not accessible when the moon in question is new. Targets make Defence rolls as Simple checks when the moon is less than half full.			
Critical:	Kauma: skill increase equal to twice the Hasheer's Devotion. Gai: +4 Protection instead. Oura: damage is equal to the Hasheer's Devotion instead.		
Defence:	Kauma and Gai: none Oura: Willpower	Save Effect:	Kauma and Gai: none Oura: damage is halved
Advancements			
None			

GERWA RITES

Hekas

The Hekas are alchemists and wonder workers of Ger. Unlike other ritualists, Hekas deal with physical reagents, binding supernatural essences into base materials. Although many Gerwa seek out the reclusive Hekas for ointments, unguents, and powders, the Hekas lie outside the caste structure that governs Gerwa society. As such, most Gerwa are uncomfortable around the alchemists. Therefore, the Hekas tend to live in isolation or take to the War Road to ply their trade in anonymity.



Powder of Ibn al-Hanef

Stories say that al-Hanef was the first Hekas in Ger, and the tales attribute many rites to him, or to his nameless sons and students. This powder that bears his name is one of the most pervasive Hekas rites. By combining lead powders and other esoteric ingredients, the Hekas can briefly bind spirits into the mortal realm, forcing them to become corporeal.

POWDER OF IBN AL-HANEF			
Location to Learn:	Ger, or from Ba-en Nafar in Sentem		
Devotion Points:	3r per invocation	**Clash Point Cost**:	2 to use
Tradition:	Hekas (Shadow)	Range:	3-yard radius
Duration:	Sustained; indefinite interval; lasts until used or dismissed Using the powder costs an action and uses Ranged Combat		
Effect			
This powder forces incorporeal spirits into the mortal realm for the duration, which allows the ritualist and their allies to see and harm them with physical weapons. Mechanically, this negates any Protection spirits might possess, as well as rending them visible. This rite creates 1d4+1 doses of the powder for the reserve cost.			
Critical:	Duration is doubled		
Defence:	Willpower	Save Effect:	Duration is halved
Advancements			
A Finer Grain: increase the rite range to 6 yards.			

Dust of Geb

This powder, the main ingredient of which is sand from the western desert, holds the desiccating power of that dry land. The Hekas refine the sand to release all the heat into a target's skin and lungs.

DUST OF GEB			
Location to Learn:	Ger		
Devotion Points:	3r per invocation	**Clash Point Cost**:	2 to use
Tradition:	Hekas (Shadow)	Range:	3 feet
Duration:	Sustained; indefinite interval; lasts until used or dismissed Using the powder costs an action and uses Ranged Combat		
Effect			
When blown into the face of an opponent, the powder sucks the water out of them and inflicts 2d6 damage (which ignores Protection). This powder only affects living creatures. On a fumble, the Hekas inhales the powder and takes the damage instead. This rite creates 1d4 doses of the powder for the reserve cost.			
Critical:	Normal combat rules for critical		
Defence:	Endurance	Save Effect:	Damage is halved
Advancements			
A Finer Grain: increase the rite range to 6 yards. *A Deeper Lore*: increase the damage to 3d6.			

Imbue Lesser Elements

This is the basic rite the Hekas use to prepare items for use in rites. It involves imbuing a prepared material of metal or finely crafted wood with a bit of the Hekas' essence. This has the effect of making the item indestructible.

IMBUE LESSER ELEMENTS			
Location to Learn:	Ger, or from Ba-en Nafar in Sentem		
Devotion Points:	8 + 2r	**Clash Point Cost**:	–
Tradition:	Hekas (Shadow)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	Sustained; indefinite interval; lasts until used or dismissed		
Effect			
This is the basic rite to prepare artefacts. It uses a bit of the Hekas' essenceto make the item indestructible. This provides a +1 to damage or Protection on appropriate items.			
Critical:	Reduce reserve cost to 1		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Bound to Fate: when invoking this rite, the Hekas may imbue an item with a Fate Point, which the wielder of the item can then access and use.			

Nightmare Token

The Hekas summons and binds a lesser Ba (a Gerwa spirit) into a small bronze token in the shape of the Faces of the Moon inscribed with the name of the target. This token, when placed near the target while they sleep, releases the nightmarish Ba, which torments the target, preventing them from resting and eventually causing death.

NIGHTMARE TOKEN			
Location to Learn:	Ger		
Devotion Points:	3r	**Clash Point Cost**:	–
Tradition:	Hekas (Shadow)	Range:	Unlimited
Duration:	Sustained		
Effect			
The target gains none of the benefits of resting (no Wound or DP recovery) and suffers 1d4 Wounds per night until the target discovers the token and destroys it, or until the token slays the target.			
Critical:	Increase the damage by applying the Hekas' Devotion to the Damage Bonus table instead of their Strength. *E.g. for Devotion 12–14, add +1d4 damage.*		
Defence:	Willpower	Save Effect:	Target gets a vision of the Hekas
Advancements			
Hidden on the Dream Road: the token is partially placed within the dream road, increasing the difficulty to detect it to a Hard check.			

Servants of the Eight

The Hem-Netjer and Hemet-Netjer of the Eight are the largest organisation within Ger. They serve as the Kian's organisational and bureaucratic power, as well as a cornerstone of Gerwa life. They take on many roles in society, depending on which deity they follow. The rites presented here are for priests and priestess who serve all of the Eight, rather than a specific devotee.

Summon Lesser Ba

Ba are the servants of the Six and the Eight. They act as messengers, agents of reprisal, warriors, and assassins. Due to their connection with the Eight, the priest or priestess can summon one of the least of their gods' servants for a limited time.

SUMMON LESSER BA

Location to Learn:	Any Temple of the Eight in Ger		
Devotion Points:	8	**Clash Point Cost:**	3 to summon 2 to control for the round
Tradition:	Servant of the Eight (Shadow)	Range:	Line of sight
Duration:	1 hour		
Effect			
Summons a lesser Ba of the Eight. At the cost of 2 Clash Points per round, the priest or priestess can order the Ba to attack. The Ba has the following profile: Defence: 40% Combat: 60% Knowledge: 50% Urban: 40% Common: 45% Actions: 1 Clash Points: 3 Wounds: 20 Damage: 1d6 (ignores Protection)			
Critical:	Duration is extended by 2 hours		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
A Servant of Strength: the Ba now inflicts 2d6 damage. *My Will Made Solid*: the Ba gains 2 PRO and +5 Wounds *The Claws of the Silent*: the Ba gains a Damage Bonus based on the priest or priestesses' Devotion.			

Aahote's Restoration

Aahote's enemies, during the time the Gerwa refer to as the Great Rending, slew and divided into him eight pieces. His enemies scattered these pieces across the face of the world. It was only when the Eight recovered the pieces and restored Aahote to life that they were able to defeat their foes and ascend to lordship and dominion. As Aahote's loved ones once reassembled him, he provides his Hem-Netjer and Hemet-Netjer the secrets of great healing. Note: A Jackal may only benefit from one ongoing Ahote's Restoration at a time.

AAHOTE'S RESTORATION

Location to Learn:	Temple of Aahote in Ger		
Devotion Points:	6	**Clash Point Cost:**	3
Tradition:	Servant of the Eight (Light)	Range:	Line of sight
Duration:	3 rounds		
Effect			
At the start of the next round, the target heals 1d6 Wounds or Valour. At the start of the following two rounds, the target heals 1d4 Wounds or Valour.			
Critical:	Duration is increased to 6 rounds, healing 1d4 Wounds or Valour at the start of each additional round		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Lasting Restoration: for the cost of 3 additional Devotion Points, this rite lasts an additional 3 rounds. *Potent Restoration*: the rite now heals both Wounds and Valour at the same time.			

Djhutemos' Seal

Djhutemos is the god who keeps the collective knowledge of the Gerwa. His is not only a keeping nature but a preserving one. By drawing the sigil of Djhutemos on a door, the priest can seal it with their god's power, keeping out the unwanted. The priest or priestess can dismiss their own seals at will.

DJHUTEMOS' SEAL			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Djhutemos in Ger		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost**:	4
Tradition:	Servant of the Eight (Shadow)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	Until broken		
Effect			
The door, even if it has no lock, is sealed. It requires an Athletics check to open with a penalty equal to twice the priestess or priest's Devotion.			
Critical:	Penalty is increased to three times the priestess or priest's Devotion		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Fearful Seal: those who attempt to break down the door must first make a difficult Willpower check. If the check fails, they are unable to break down the door due to fear of Djhutemos' wrath.			

Sandals of Anu

Anu's throne is set in the Silent Lands beneath the world. By drawing on the essence of the Silent Lands around them, the priest or priestess of Anu can to move about silently and leave no trail in the mortal world, in service of their lord.

SANDALS OF ANU			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Anu in Ger or the Servant's Trade House in Ameena Noani		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost:**	2
Tradition:	Servant of the Eight (Shadow)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	1 hour		
Effect			
The priestess or priest, or their target, gains a bonus to Stealth equal to the priestess or priest's Devotion, and leaves no footprints.			
Critical:	The bonus is increased to twice the priestess or priest's Devotion		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Cloak of Anu: for a cost of 6 DP, the range of the rite becomes 3 yards, allowing the priestess or priest to take a small group (up to four others) with them.			

MELKONI

Rylareia

Ryla is the daughter of Araton and is the Lady of Passion. Her priestesses and priests, the Rylareia, carry forth conflict, beauty, and the search for perfection wherever they go. In Kroryla, there is a large temple to Ryla, as the town bears her name. There, they practise with blade, song, and body to present themselves in perfect union with their goddess.

Strength of the Goddess

Ryla's strength comes from her passion. Her acolytes can call upon this passion to flow into them, granting them strength beyond what their bodies could normally bear. When invoking this rite, the acolyte's skin flushes with their goddess' passion.

STRENGTH OF THE GODDESS			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Ryla in Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	5	**Clash Point Cost:**	1
Tradition:	Ryla (Light)	Range:	Self
Duration:	5 rounds		
Effect			
Calling upon the goddess of war and love, the Rylareia summons the strength of Ryla to flow into them. The rite increases the acoloyte's Strength by 8, but only for the purpose of calculating their Damage Bonus.			
Critical:	Strength increases by 12 instead		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Passionate Embrace: the rite also increases the acolyte's Mettle by 5 for the duration of the rite.			

Balm of the Goddess

The touch of Ryla, while always passionate, is not always painful. Sometimes her touch is light and soothing, and the touch of the Rylareia can be the same. They learn to soothe and cure as well as cut and bruise. During combat, the Rylareia’s touch can reinvigorate their allies.

BALM OF THE GODDESS			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Ryla in Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Ryla (Light)	Range:	Touch
Duration:	Instant		
Effect			
The power of Ryla can restore the failing breath of an ally. The power of the goddess flows into the target, healing them instantly for 2d6 Valour.			
Critical:	Healing increases to 4d6 Valour		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
The Goddess’ Touch: the rite can now heal 1d4 Wounds instead of 2d6 Valour. *Enflamed Passions*: the rite now heals 4d6 Valour (8d6 on a critical).			

Fires of Passion

Passion is all-consuming, leaving little room for other thoughts. While this is often detrimental, the goddess’ passion can flood those around her acolytes, and armour their minds. The voice of the goddess cries out through the Rylareia, emboldening their allies.

FIRES OF PASSION			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Ryla in Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	3 per target	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Ryla (Shadow)	Range:	Earshot
Duration:	4 rounds		
Effect			
Those within earshot gain a bonus to their Willpower checks equal to the Rylareia’s Devotion.			
Critical:	Duration increases to 8 rounds		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Rage of the Goddess: the cry not only emboldens her allies, but frightens her enemies. This rite can now target enemies, who find their Willpower reduced by the Rylareia’s Devotion.			

Ryla's Blessing

Ryla's chosen can call upon their goddess' blessing to infuse their weapons. The goddess' golden arsenal becomes embodied for the moment in her chosen's weapons and armour, granting them greater protection, skill, and damage.

RYLA'S BLESSING			
Location to Learn:	Temple of Ryla in Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	2	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Ryla (Shadow)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Sustained; 1-round interval		
Effect			
For the duration of the rite, the acolyte gains +1 Protection, receives +10% Melee Combat, and deals +2 damage.			
Critical:	The rite is sustained for an additional round at no cost		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Orichalcum Blade: the chosen's weapons become orichalcum for the duration of the rite, ignoring 4 points of Protection. *Orichalcum Shield*: the chosen's armour becomes orichalcum for the duration of the rite, increasing the Protection bonus by +3. *Skill of the Goddess*: the passion of Ryla fills the chosen, increasing their Melee Combat bonus to +25%.			

Warrior of Lykos

The Melkoni worship Lykos, the demi-god founder and patron of Kroryla. The trials he overcame to found the city have become legend, and his warriors seek to emulate their patron's deeds and goals in the land of Kalypsis.

Trial of the Nyssalis

To found Kroryla, Lykos had to claim the site for the town from a Nyssalis, a dread hydra. He bathed in the venomous blood of the beast before it cooled, and gained power over the lesser venoms of the earth.

TRIAL OF THE NYSSALIS			
Location to Learn:	Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Lykos (Light)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Instant (reaction)		
Effect			
The warrior can call upon Lykos' mastery to grant the target a re-roll to Endurance rolls versus poisons, toxins, and venoms.			
Critical:	The re-roll is made with a bonus to Endurance equal to the warrior's Devotion		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Shared Blood: this rite now applies to up to four of the warrior's allies.			

Trial of the Herds

Two families whose grazing land overlapped each claimed the other stole portions of their herd. Lykos mediated the dispute, and the two groups became the founding families of Kroryla. The warrior can call upon Lykos' wisdom to negotiate better terms for all parties involved.

TRIAL OF THE HERDS			
Location to Learn:	Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Lykos (Shadow)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Sustained; 5-minute interval		
Effect			
This rite grants the warrior a bonus to Influence and Trade equal to their Devotion.			
Critical:	The warrior can roll twice for Influence or Trade checks and take the desired result.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
The Tongue of Lykos: in addition to the bonus this rite grants, all other parties take a penalty to Influence equal to the warrior's Devotion.			

Trial of the Giant's Daughters

Kroryla's first major conflict after its founding was with the Daughters of Ceenon. The trio of sisters would raid the small town, carrying off the men they wanted, and taking them into the mountains. When no peaceful solution could be reached, Lykos tricked the sisters into slaying their father, an act for which Araton cursed them and their line. When peaceful options no longer remained, Lykos' cunning saved the town.

TRIAL OF THE GIANT'S DAUGHTERS			
Location to Learn:	Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Lykos (Shadow)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Sustainted; 5-minute interval		
Effect			
The warrior calls upon Lykos to aid their tricks, granting them a bonus to Deception equal to their Devotion.			
Critical:	The warrior can roll twice for Deception checks and take the desired result.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
The Cloak of Lykos: in addition to the bonus this rite grants, all other parties take a penalty to Perception equal to the warrior's Devotion.			

Trial of Peace

The wrath of the Daughters of Ceenon almost destroyed Kroryla. In the end, Lykos called upon his mother, turning himself and the giantesses into stone. Their statues still stand outside the walls of Kroryla. The warriors can call upon an echo of this act, stilling the wrathful acts of others around them.

TRIAL OF PEACE			
Location to Learn:	Kroryla		
Devotion Points:	7	**Clash Point Cost**:	4
Tradition:	Lykos (Light)	Range:	Line of sight
Duration:	Sustained; 1-minute interval		
Effect			
The warrior prevents all violence within their line of sight. They break the protection of the rite if they do anything to encourage violence or take any action to prepare for further bloodshed.			
Critical:	The rite is sustained for an additional minute at no cost		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
None			

TRAUJ

Yahtahmi

The Yahtahmi are more than storytellers and entertainers. They carry the stories and morals of the Trauj from one generation to the next. They inspire, remind, and castigate those around them to seek to be worthy of their ancestors.

Zahra Breaks the First Horse

Foremost among all the Yahtah is Zahra. Zahra was the first Trauj to sneak across the plains of the east and steal the Flood of Darkness' horses. She returned with the sires and dams of the great herds, which the Trauj now tend. Her story is the greatest glory of the Trauj and set the bar to which all aspire. The Trauj remember her to this day.

ZAHRA BREAKS THE FIRST HORSE

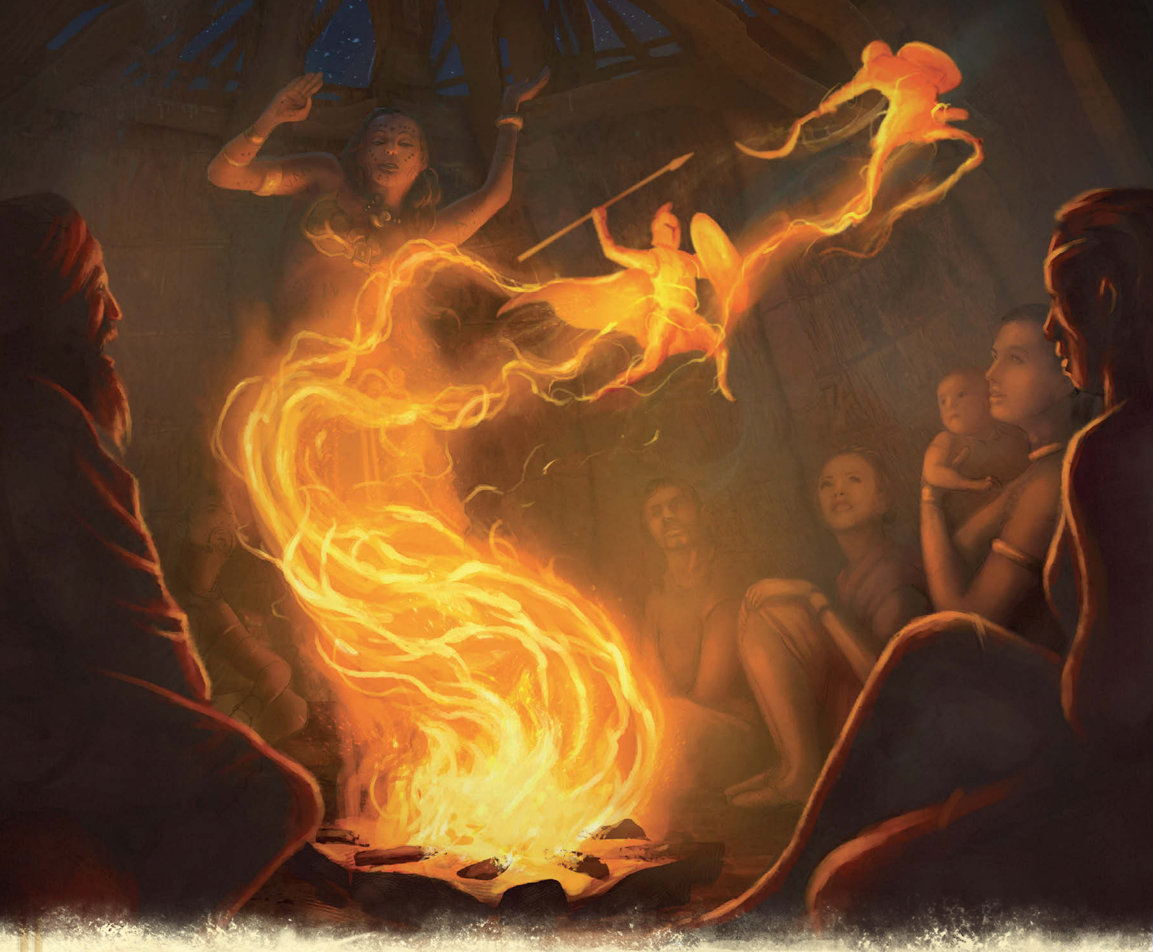
Location to Learn:	From any clan in the Luasa Desert		
Devotion Points:	4 per target	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Yahtahmi (Light)	Range:	Earshot
Duration:	4 rounds		
Effect			
Remembering Zahra grants the targets a bonus Clash Point while on horseback and a bonus to Ride equal to the Yahtahmi’s Devotion.			
Critical:	The bonus to Ride is equal to twice the Yahtahmi’s Devotion.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Zahra’s Fell Hand: the rite now grants a Damage Bonus from horseback of 1d4 or increases the Damage Bonus of the target by one step, whichever is greater. *The Horse and the Rider are One*: the bonus from Devotion also applies to Combat skills from horseback.			

Ilou Slaughters the Eastern Beasts

Ilou was the first of the Alkitar. When the Takan arose to slay the children, Ilou rose up and hunted them throughout the Luasa. Wherever they went, Ilou killed them. Wherever they camped, Ilou killed them. Ilou was the first of the Alkitar, and the Trauj remember him to this day.

ILOU SLAUGHTERS THE EASTERN BEASTS

Location to Learn:	From the Arrow Clan in the Luasa Desert		
Devotion Points:	4 per target	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Yahtahmi (Light)	Range:	Earshot
Duration:	1 day		
Effect			
Remembering Ilou grants the targets a bonus to Lore, Survival, and Endurance while tracking Takan equal to the Yahtahmi’s Devotion.			
Critical:	The skill bonuses are equal to twice the Yahtahmi’s Devotion.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
Ilou’s Keen Eye: the rite also allows the ritualist to apply their Damage Bonus to ranged attacks against Takan and grants a d4 damage bonus if the target does not possess a Damage Bonus. *Slay the Beasts!*: the bonus is also added to Combat skills against Takan.			



Yakhia Crosses the Luasa

When the giants freed the Trauj, it was Yakhia who followed them, and led the children out of the east into the Luasa. When the children refused to enter the desert until they knew it was safe, Yakhia crossed its length and breadth bringing back reports. The Trauj remember him to this day.

YAKHIA CROSSES THE LUASA			
Location to Learn:	From the Arrow Clan in the Luasa Desert		
Devotion Points:	2 per target	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Yahtahmi (Light)	Range:	Earshot
Duration:	1 day		
Effect			
Remembering Yakhia grants the targets a bonus to Perception, Survival, and Athletics equal to the Yahtahmi's Devotion.			
Critical:	The skill bonuses are doubled.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
The Desert Holds No Secrets: the bonus also applies to Defence skills against natural dangers.			

Tamat Finds the Well of the World

The Flood of Darkness sent forth a plague that corrupted the wells of the Trauj. Guided by the tales of Yakhia and Zahra, Tamat journeyed throughout the Luasa and discovered the hidden refuge of the Well of the World. In this way, the Trauj survived and were bound together. The Trauj remember her to this day.

TAMAT FINDS THE WELL OF THE WORLD			
Location to Learn:	From any clan in the Luasa Desert		
Devotion Points:	3 per target	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Yahtahmi (Light)	Range:	Earshot
Duration:	1 day		
Effect			
Remembering Tamat grants the target a bonus to Healing and Culture (Trauj) equal to the Yahtahmi's Devotion.			
Critical:	The skill bonuses are equal to twice the Yahtahmi's Devotion.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
The Well of the World is Life: the rite sustains the targets and they do not need to drink any water for the remainder of the day.			

Alkitar

The Alkitar are those children born to the Trauj as vessels for the hate of their ancestors. None know who chooses the children or how. They do not manifest their uniqueness until the rites of adulthood, when the unfinished works and hate of the Yahtah and the giants possess them. Then, other Alkitar claim them and take them out into the desert, where they are honed and refined before being released to their fate among the sands, eternally hunting and slaying the enemies of the Trauj.

Note that Alkitar rites work differently from other rites in that, once initiated, the Alkitar cannot (generally) control when the rite comes to an end. Each rite has a positive and a negative component, which both last until the Alkitar manages to get their rage back under control, passes out, or dies. The Defence rolls in these rites refer to the skill the Alkitar must use to end the rite. An Alkitar can decide at the end of their turn to attempt to end a rite. On a critical, the Alkitar may end their rite immediately, should they choose.

EXAMPLE OF ALKITAR RITE

Rahma invokes The Blood of Giants while fighting a Gadakan. Her Strength increases to 22. After taking her turn, she suffers 1d4 Wounds. Rolling a 2, she suffers 2 Wounds. At the start of her next turn, she recovers 1d8 Valour and decides to try to end the rite. At the end of her turn, she again suffers 1d4 Wounds and makes her Willpower check. If she is successful, the rite will cease at the end of her next turn (requiring her to suffer 1d4 Wounds once more). If she fails, she can attempt to end the rite again on her next turn.

The Blood of Giants

The Alkitar calls upon the blood of the giants that runs deep within them. When the blood bubbles to the surface, the Alkitar seems to grow in stature and vigour. However, the body of the mortal Alkitar cannot support the blood of giants for very long. Giving into this power without restraint can burst the Alkitar's heart in a matter of moments.

THE BLOOD OF GIANTS			
Location to Learn:	Nowhere; the giants choose their own		
Devotion Points:	4	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Alkitar (Light)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Continues until the player performs a successful Willpower check at the end of their turn; the rite then ceases at the end of the following turn		
Effect			
While in the grip of the blood, the Alkitar gains +8 to Strength, regains 1d8 Valour at the start of each round, and suffers 1d4 Wounds at the end of each round. Additionally, the Alkitar attack the closest being (including allies) each round. Should there be multiple targets at a similar range, they must choose to attack a Takan. If there is any dispute as to what the closest target is, the Loremaster adjudicates.			
Critical:	The Alkitar retains some control of the blood and is able to choose their first target		
Defence:	Willpower	Save Effect:	The rite lasts one more round, then it ends
Advancements			
Succour of the Ancients: the Alkitar masters a portion of the Blood of Giants. After coming out of the rite, the Alkitar can make a d100 roll against twice their Devotion. If this check succeeds, the Alkitar heals 2d6 Wounds.			

The Hateful Arrow

The Alkitar are able to take the giant's hate in their blood and turn it against their foes. By raking their arrows against their skin or chewing on their sling stones, the Alkitar can imbue their ranged attack with additional potency.

THE HATEFUL ARROW			
Location to Learn:	Nowhere; the giants choose their own		
Devotion Points:	6	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Alkitar (Shadow)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Continues until the player performs a successful Willpower check at the end of their turn; the rite then ceases at the end of the following turn		
Effect			
All ranged attacks that hit cause bleeding wounds, which continue to deal 1d4 points of damage per hit as long as this rite is active. The Alkitar suffers 1d4 Wounds per ranged attack they make. Additionally, they are so focused on raining down death that they ignore their own melee defence. The Alkitar can still use their Clash Points to defend, but can only use Dodge to avoid the attack. Furthermore, their Dodge skill suffers a penalty equal to their Devotion.			
Critical:	Dodge skill does not suffer the penalty		
Defence:	Willpower	Save Effect:	The rite lasts one more round, then it ends
Advancements			
None			

Breaking the Serpent's Standard

Takan have ever flocked to the Serpent's Standard, and the Alkitar have ever sought to see that banner broken for all time. This rite gives the Alkitar the ability to destroy those who flock to the ancient symbol.

BREAKING THE SERPENT'S STANDARD			
Location to Learn:	Nowhere; the giants choose their own		
Devotion Points:	5	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Alkitar (Light)	Range:	Self
Duration:	Continues until the player performs a successful Willpower check at the end of their turn; the rite then ceases at the end of the following turn		
Effect			
When the Alkitar invokes this rite, they gain the ability to react to all Takan attacks directed at them: that is, they do not need to spend any Clash Points to react to a Takan. However, the Alkitar is so focused on reacting to Takan that they suffer a penalty to attacks made on their turn equal to their Devotion, and cannot spend Clash Points to react to a non-Takan attack.			
Critical:	Attacks on the Alkitar's own turn do not suffer the penalty		
Defence:	Willpower	Save Effect:	The rite lasts one more round, then it ends
Advancements			
Breadth of Hate: the rite now applies to all enemies of the Mouadah and Skessh types.			

Hate Beyond Life

In the face of the Eastern threat, the Alkitar possess no pity, remorse, or fear. Their hate propels them to end the spawn of the flood at the cost of their own life. There are moments in battle where the blood of one must stand against the blood of many. In this moment, the Alkitar can sacrifice their life to end their foe's.

HATE BEYOND LIFE			
Location to Learn:	Nowhere; the giants choose their own		
Devotion Points:	All	**Clash Point Cost**:	0
Tradition:	Alkitar (Light)	Range:	Self
Duration:	8 rounds		
Effect			
The Alkitar can only invoke this right in the face of Takan, Skessh, Rathic, and those who visibly serve the Ironbound Tree. The Alkitar activates all of the rites they know at a cost of 0 Clash Points and Devotion Points when they invoke Hate Beyond Life. They automatically succeed on all Willpower and Endurance checks against rites from the Mouatheni tradition. They suffer 0 damage from all attacks for the duration of the rite. Nothing short of complete incapacitation (such as being bound) will stop the Alkitar. At the end of 8 rounds, the Alkitar has expended all their hate. They are reduced to 0 Valour and 0 Wounds, and die. They may not spend a Fate Point to save themselves.			
Critical:	Duration is increased to 12 rounds		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
None			

MOUATHENI

Mouathenic is the name for those who tap into the corrupt and dark magics of the world. This path is open to all who would embrace the Chaos that threatens to consume the hearts, minds, and works of humanity. Ritualists can discover these secrets by communing with dark and strange entities, studying inscriptions on ancient walls in forgotten temples, or learning them while in the throes of ecstatic madness.

Chilling Wind

Mouathenics quickly discover their rites have an affinity for the cold and dark. One of the first rites a Mouathenic learns is how to cut their foes with a biting wind.

CHILLING WIND			
Location to Learn:	The dark places in the Lands of Rising		
Devotion Points:	3	**Clash Point Cost**:	2
Tradition:	Mouatheni (Darkness)	Range:	15 yards
Duration:	Instant		
Effect			
The Mouathenic summons the essence of the far north to rake their opponents. This fell and terrible rite inflicts 2d6 damage (which ignores Protection) on all enemies in a straight line.			
Critical:	The targets are also immobilized for 1 round as their limbs seize up. While immobile, they may not spend CP.		
Defence:	Endurance	Save Effect:	Damage is halved
Advancements			
Pervasive Chill: the width of the rite's effect is now 3 yards. *Creeping Chill*: the rite coats the affected area in thin ice, halving all Move values within the area and forcing a difficult Athletics check to prevent falling.			

The Evil Eye

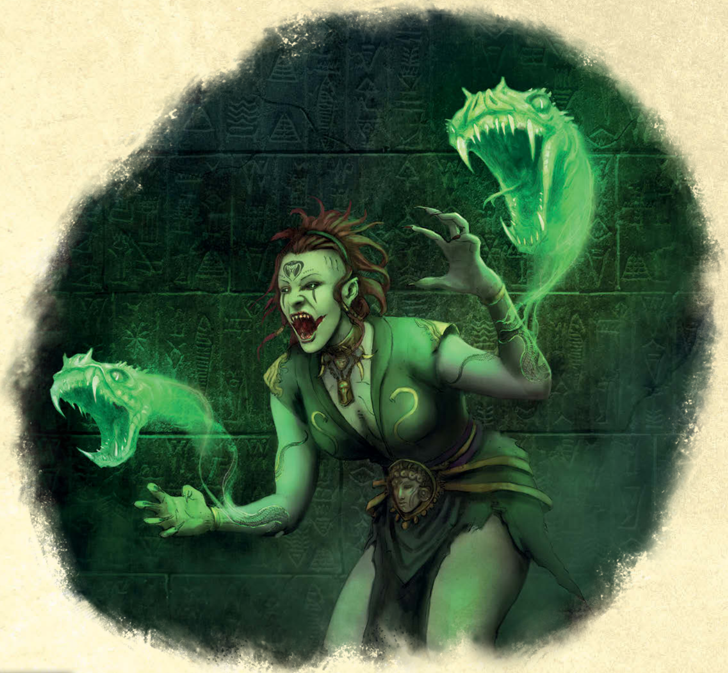
One of the lies Chaos tells people is that there is limited good in the world. If someone has prosperity, others are suffering. The legend of the evil eye has grown out of this envious belief. The Mouathenic learn to cast their envious eye at the target and curse them with evil fortune.

THE EVIL EYE			
Location to Learn:	The dark places in the Lands of Rising		
Devotion Points:	3r	**Clash Point Cost**:	0
Tradition:	Mouatheni (Darkness)	Range:	Line of sight
Duration:	Sustained; indefinite interval; lasts until dismissed		
Effect			
The Mouathenic bestows a negative, unlucky trait on the target, which stays in effect while the Devotion Points remain in reserve.			
Critical:	The Devotion Point reserve cost drops to 1r.		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
None			

Serpent Spirits

The Mouathenic tattoo themselves with the spirit animal of their tradition, the serpent. They can send forth pairs of spectral snakes from their hands, manifestations of their Corruption. They are able to see through the eyes of their serpents, and can cause the serpents to strike their foes with deadly venom.

SERPENT SPIRITS			
Location to Learn:	The dark places in the Lands of Rising		
Devotion Points:	5	**Clash Point Cost**:	4
Tradition:	Mouatheni (Darkness)	Range:	Self
Duration:	1 hour		
Effect			
Summons a cluster of serpent spirits. At the cost of 2 Clash Points per turn, the Mouathenic can order the spirits to attack. The spirits act as one being, and have the following profile: Defence: 40% Combat: 65% Knowledge: 0% Urban: 65% Common: 50% Valour: 0 Wounds: 12 Damage: 1d4 + poison Poison: 1d6 damage for 4 rounds, which ignores Protection			
Critical:	Duration is increased to 2 hours		
Defence:	Endurance (against poison)	Save Effect:	Damage and duration halved
Advancements			
Potent Venom: increase the poison damage of the serpents to 2d6. *Lingering Poison*: the potency of the serpents' venom lingers in the victim's system for 1d6 days. At sunset, the target suffers the damage roll again. *Enervating Poison*: the serpents' bite also affects the Mettle of the target, dealing 1d4 Mettle damage. This damage can be healed per the normal rules for recovering Mettle.			



The Hidden Knife

The Mouathenic calls upon the darkness that dwells in their soul and between the stars. They are able to cast it out around them, shrouding the world in blackness.

THE HIDDEN KNIFE			
Location to Learn:	The dark places in the Lands of Rising		
Devotion Points:	2r	**Clash Point Cost**:	1
Tradition:	Mouatheni (Darkness)	Range:	50-foot radius
Duration:	Sustained; indefinite interval; lasts until dismissed		
Effect			
This rite cloaks all non-spiritual light in total darkness. Within the 50-foot radius, even the stars and moons are blotted out. The Mouathenic's rite centres this darkness on the invoker, and it moves with them. However, the ritualist cannot invoke this rite under the direct light of the sun. The Mouathenic can see in this total darkness perfectly. While attacking from within the darkness, the Mouathenic gains +15% to all rites and Martial skills. The rite raises their highest Combat skill by +15%.			
Critical:	The radius is increased to 100 feet		
Defence:	None	Save Effect:	None
Advancements			
None			

CHAPTER 6

ADVANCEMENT

Naput stared in shock. The black arrow had been racing for him. He was sure the Six had signed his name to it: the razor-sharp chariot that would carry him to Anu's halls. He could not move, bound as he was by the Ankabar's webs. Yet its point never struck home. When his eyes opened, the point hung before his face. The shaft had punched through Nikos' shield, but the wood and leather held it fast.

Naput went back to slicing the webbing clear with his knives. How in the Six's domain did that man move so fast?

Characters in *Jackals* do not stay at their initial level of competency. As the characters explore the Zaharets, they can increase their abilities through two methods: passive and active advancements.

Ancient Lore cannot be advanced through passive or active advancements.

PASSIVE ADVANCEMENTS

Passive advancements represent the process by which a character improves a skill by using it. For each skill your Jackal successfully used at least once during a session, you should make a passive advance skill check at the end of the session. If the roll **fails** (meaning you roll over your skill percentage), the skill increases. If the roll is a **fumble**, you double the increase. The increase is defined according to the skill's current percentage.

PASSIVE ADVANCEMENTS		
Skill Level	Skill Increase on Fail	Skill Increase on Fumble
Less than 50%	+5%	+10%
51% – 75%	+3%	+6%
76%+	+2%	+4%

Because you always fail a check on a roll of 91 – 100%, it is possible to gain passive advancements after a skill reaches 100%!

An advancement roll is only allowed if the skill in question was legitimately used during the session. The Loremaster should deny requests for skill rolls when a player calls for them just to fish for passive advancements.

Traits affect advancement rolls. When making a passive advancement roll for a skill with a trait, you may choose the most advantageous 1s result (in this case, looking to fail the check). Additionally, any modifiers used on the skill's initial attempt are ignored for advancement rolls.

EXAMPLE OF PASSIVE ADVANCEMENT

Calvin's character, Josia, succeeded at a Perception check while searching for Takan during the session. At the end of the session, he makes a check against Josia's Perception of 65%. If Calvin rolls 65% or less, Josia learns nothing. However, if he rolls 66% or above, Josia's Perception will increase to 68%. If he fumbles, Josia's Perception will instead increase to 71%.

ACTIVE ADVANCEMENTS

At the end of the adventure, the Loremaster hands out active advancements. Active advancements can be spent on a few different boons, some of which cost more than one advancement. Active advancements can be saved between adventures.

ACTIVE ADVANCEMENTS

Cost	Effect
1	Increase a skill of level 100% or less by +10%
1	Increase a skill of level 101% or more by +5%
1	Learn a new rite. The rite starts at [DEV + WIS]%
2	Increase an attribute by 1, to a maximum of 22 If the Jackal's Devotion is 0, it cannot be increased this way
3	Gain a new trait
3	Gain access to a magic tradition of the Jackal's culture. They gain 9 Devotion and learn a rite of the chosen tradition, which starts at [DEV + WIS]%

You can only spend an active advancement on a particular skill or attribute once per adventure.

When a player chooses to gain a new trait for their character, the Loremaster should work with them to create it. It should possess:

- a flavourful name which ties the trait back to the setting;
- a primary skill to which it applies;
- a narrow application.

Using these guidelines, it should be possible to create any specific trait a player might want.

EXAMPLE OF ACTIVE ADVANCEMENT

Trish hands out four active advancements at the end of an adventure. Mark could increase four skills, but could not advance the same skill more than once. He instead decides he wants his Trauj Jackal to become an Alkitar, which costs three of his advancements. His Jackal now gains 9 Devotion, and Mark decides they will learn the Blood of Giants rite. As his Jackal has a Wisdom of 14, the Blood of Giants rite starts at 23%. Mark decides to spend his last advancement to increase this level by 10 to 33%.

ADVANCED SKILL TALENTS

Jackals, when they advance any skill beyond 100%, open up new abilities. Whenever a Jackal reaches a skill increment of 20% above 100% (so 120%, 140%, 160%, and so on), they can select one talent of the appropriate skill from the list below for free. Talents can take attributes beyond the maximum of 22.

Jackals can purchase some talents multiple times, with the 'Maximum' number indicating how many times that talent can be gained. For example, Jackals can gain a 'Maximum 3' talent three times in total. All talents are 'Maximum 1' unless otherwise noted.

DEFENSIVE SKILL TALENTS

Dodge

Arrow Snatch: a character with this talent can spend 2 additional Clash Points (for a total of 3) when defending against a ranged attack. Should they win the Clash, they grab the missile out of the air. [Maximum 2: lower the Clash Point cost of this talent by 1 when a Jackal purchases it a second time.]

Eerie Reactions: a character with this talent can always make a Dodge roll against effects that allow them to roll for half damage, even when the situation would prevent them from spending Clash Points (for example, if the character is surprised, bound, or ambushed).

Insightful Reflexes: a character with this talent can spend 3 Clash Points or a Fate Point to allow their Dodge roll to affect another character within their Move range. [Maximum 3: lower the Clash Point cost of this application by 1 for each additional time a Jackal purchases it.]

Jackal's Reflexes: when a character with this talent makes a Dodge check against effects that would grant them half damage on a successful check, they instead take a quarter damage.

Willpower

Iron Will: when a character with this talent makes a Willpower check against effects that would grant them half damage on a successful check, they instead take a quarter damage.

Rattling Will: when a character with this talent makes successful Willpower check, it causes a backlash against the originator of the effect. The originator takes a –20% penalty to any subsequent skill check that affects Willpower against this character for the rest of the adventure. On a critical, the character with this talent deals 2d6 Wounds (ignoring Protection) to the originator, representing the violence of their resistance.

Sensitive Mind: when a character with this talent makes successful Willpower check, it allows that character to make a Perception check to discern a clue about the person who was influencing them.

Slippery Mind: when a character with this talent fails a Willpower check, they can push the effects of the failed check off for 1 round with a Fate Point. They can continue to do so at the start of their turn by spending additional Fate Points.

Endurance

More Weight!: increase the character's maximum Encumbrance by 2. [Maximum 5]
Robust: increase the character's max Wounds per row by 1. [Maximum 3]
Solid Constitution: when a character with this talent makes an Endurance check against effects that would grant them half damage on a successful check, they instead take a quarter damage.
Sterner Mettle: increase the character's max Mettle score by 2. [Maximum 2]
Used to the Trail: the character gains 1 Protection from Fatigue. [Maximum 2]

KNOWLEDGE SKILL TALENTS

Culture (Own)

A Face in the Crowd: a character with this talent can add 10% of their skill to Deception checks when trying to disguise themselves as another member of their culture.
An Understanding of Etiquette: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to use Culture (Own) when an ally fails at a Culture check. If they succeed, they can reframe the social faux pas in a more favourable manner. Their check now counts as the result for the test.
Cleansing Rituals: a character with this talent can increase the efficacy of their culture's cleansing rituals. When they, or a member of their group in the same culture, takes the 'Atonement' seasonal action (see page 156), they can increase the loss of Corruption by 1d4.
These Are My People: a character with this talent reduces the cost of the Carousing or Find Rumour seasonal action by 50 ss while in their culture's areas. [Maximum 3]
Well-known: when a character takes this talent, they increase their Kleos level by 2 (see page 174). This advancement stacks with other talents. [Maximum 3]

Culture (Other)

A Face in the Crowd: a character with this talent selects a culture other than their own. They can add 10% of their skill to Deception checks when trying to disguise themselves as a member of that culture.
An Exchange of Ideas: a character with this talent selects a culture other than their own. They can now choose traits from that other culture; additionally, they receive one trait from that culture. [Maximum 3]
An Understanding of Etiquette: a character with this talent selects a culture other than their own. They can use Culture (Other) when an ally fails at a Culture check for that culture. If they succeed, they can reframe the social faux pas in a more favourable manner. Their check now counts as the result for the test. [Maximum 3]
Language Mastery: a character with this talent can select one culture's language. They no longer need to roll to ensure they understand that language. Additionally, they are literate in that language. [Maximum 3]
I Know These People: a character with this talent selects a culture other than their own. Reduce the cost of the Carousing or Find Rumour seasonal action by 25 ss while in that culture's locations. [Maximum 3]
Steeped in Secrets: a character with this talent selects a magical tradition from a culture other than their own. They can now purchase rites from this tradition.

Healing

Deft Hands: a character with this talent increases the healing gained by 2 when they roll a successful Healing check. [Maximum 3]

Triage: a character with this talent can immediately treat a Wound after a fight, healing the target for 1d4 Wounds. Limited to once per day.

Respite: a character with this talent can now make a Healing check to help characters recover Mettle damage. Limited to once per day.

Acalana Specialist: a character with this talent can now use acalana resin for 1 Clash Point instead of 2 when in combat. Additionally, the acalana restores Valour as well as Wounds.

Lore

A Better Understanding: a character with this talent can add 10% of their Lore skill to their Ancient Lore skill.

Specialist: a character with this talent selects a speciality in Lore. They immediately gain a trait reflecting this specialisation, and only fail on a roll of 96–100% when using this speciality.

Identify Corruption: a character with this talent can make a Lore roll at half skill to discover whether a person in their presence has Corruption. The person opposes this roll with their Corruption × 3. The Loremaster must let the player know whether the target is a little (1–10), moderately (11–15), or very (16+) corrupted. Note: An NPC who is suppressing Corruption will not register as corrupt.

Identify Rite: a character with this talent can make a Lore roll to identify a rite cast in their presence (assuming they notice it), as well as the tradition to which it belongs.

Inhuman Language Mastery: a character with this talent can select one of the following languages: Hannic, Mouadran, Skesshic, or Rathic. They no longer need to roll to ensure they understand the language. [Maximum 4.]

Learn Rite: a character with this talent can learn one rite from a tradition of their culture. If they have no Devotion Points, they must still open the Devotion attribute before they can invoke this rite. This talent allows characters to slowly learn rites outside their tradition and learn new rites within their tradition. These new rites start at (DEV + WIS).

MARTIAL SKILL TALENTS

When a Jackal increases a combat skill above 100%, they can make multiple attacks by dividing the combat skill. For every 100% they have in the skill, they can divide the total skill percentage one additional time. They can divide the skill between these attacks however they choose.

EXAMPLE OF MULTIPLE ATTACKS

Bet has a Ranged Combat skill of 215%. She can divide this up to two times for a total of three attacks (one normal attack, one for having a skill above 100%, and one for having a skill above 200%). Bet could choose to make two attacks at 75%, and one at 65%.

Athletics

Strength of Iron: a character with this talent possesses physical training that has pushed them past the limits of others. Add +3 to the character's Strength attribute. This can take it above 22. [Maximum 2]
Fleet of Foot: Increase the character's Move by 2. [Maximum 5]
Addax's Reflexes: Increase the character's Clash Points by 1. [Maximum 3]
Monkey's Surety: a character with this talent can climb sheer walls without a rope, trusting in their natural skill and strength to scale the surface.
Mule's Resilience: The character may ignore 3 points of Encumbrance. [Maximum 3]

Melee Combat

Disarming Strike: a character with this talent, while wielding a sword, staff, or khopesh, can attempt to disarm their opponent. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, they toss the opponent's weapon a number of yards away equal to their Strength. Note: the character must win the Clash for this effect. Additionally, the character inflicts half damage.

Graceful Reflexes: Increase the character's initiative score by 3. [Maximum 2]

Interpose: a character with this talent can spend Clash Points to react and attempt to take a blow for another character within 3 yards. The character with this talent must be using a shield. To react in this way costs 2 Clash Points, and the character is treated as if they were the target of the original attack. They can then spend additional Clash Points to react as normal to that attack. Each additional use of Interpose in a round increases the Clash Point cost by 1 (3 Clash Points for the second, 4 for the third, etc.).

EXAMPLE OF INTERPOSE

An Atakan attacks Neferu with its 'Rip You Apart!' ability. Usati, her bodyguard, spends 2 Clash Points to take the blow on himself. Because Rip You Apart! has two attacks, Usati can now spend 2 additional Clash Points to turn the Atakan's attacks into opposed checks. Watching out for someone else in combat is dangerous business!

Piercing Thrust: a character with this talent, while wielding a dagger or a spear, ignores 2 points of a target's Protection. [Maximum 2]

Quick Reflexes: a character with this talent selects a special combat Clash Point use (Power Attack, Precise Blow, or Sweeping Arc) when selecting this talent. Reduce the Clash Point cost for performing it by 1.

Rending Strike: a character with this talent, while wielding a sword, staff, or khopesh, can attempt to destroy an opponent's shield or armour. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, the character reduces their opponent's shield or armour (in that order) by 2 Protection. If Rending Strike reduces armour to 0 Protection, it renders the item useless until a successful Craft roll is made during a seasonal action. Additionally, the character inflicts half damage.

Skillful Strike: The character must choose a weapon when selecting this talent. When using that weapon, they can re-roll any damage dice results of '1'.

Ranged Combat

Disarming Shot: a character with this talent can attempt to disarm their opponent. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, the character knocks their opponent's weapon 1d10 yards away. Note: the character must win the Clash for this effect; additionally, the character inflicts half damage.

Far Shot: a character with this talent can double the distance of their ranged weapons.

Heavy Shot: a character with this talent, while wielding a sling or a staff sling, can attempt to stun their opponent. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, the opponent loses all Clash Points for 1d4 rounds.

Piercing Shot: a character with this talent, while wielding a bow, ignores 2 points of a target's Protection.

Pinning Shot: a character with this talent can use a bow or spear to pin a charging opponent in place with an arrow or spearhead. The character makes a Clash roll against the charging opponent; on a successful hit, the character inflicts half damage and halves the distance of the opponent's Move. The pinned target must make an Endurance check to pull themselves free.

Quick Reflexes: a character with this talent selects a special Clash Point use (Overdraw, Precise Aim, or Rapid Fire) when selecting this talent. Reduce the Clash Point cost for preforming the improved action effect by 1.

Skillful Shot: a character with this talent selects a weapon when selecting this talent. When using that weapon, re-roll any damage dice with a result of '1'.

Unarmed Combat

Brutal Blows: a character with this talent now inflicts 1d6 damage in Unarmed Combat. [Maximum 2: increase damage to 1d8.]

Disarming Grab: a character with this talent can attempt to disarm their opponent. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, the character knocks their opponent's weapon away a number of yards equal to the character's Strength. Note: The character must win the Clash for this effect; additionally, they inflict half damage.

Graceful Reflexes: Increase the character's Initiative score by 3. [Maximum 2]

Quick Reflexes: a character with this talent chooses a special Clash Point use (Power Attack, Precise Blow, or Sweeping Arc) when selecting this talent. Reduce the Clash Point cost for preforming the improved action effect by 1.

Skillful Strike: a character with this talent re-rolls any damage dice with a result of '1' while making an Unarmed Combat check.

Wrestler: a character with this talent can impose a penalty to a target's skills by grappling them. They must make an attack roll at half skill. If the Clash is successful, the character grapples their opponent, inflicting a penalty on all the opponent's skill rolls equal to the character's Strength or Deftness (whichever is higher). A Jackal increases this penalty by +5 each time they select this talent. They also inflict their unarmed damage each round as an action. To escape the grapple, the target must initiate a Clash between the attacker's Unarmed Combat and the defender's Unarmed Combat, Athletics, Dodge, or Endurance. A success frees the defender. [Maximum 3]

URBAN SKILL TALENTS

Deception

Adept Trickery: a character with this talent is adept at tricking their foes, and can spend 3 Clash Points to make a Deception versus Willpower check against a target. The target's Clash Point cost against this character is increased by 2 on a success or 4 on a critical. [Maximum 2: additional purchases of this talent lower the Clash Point cost of this talent's use by one.]

The Best Part of Belief: a character with this talent is adept at making the most outrageous lie believable. When the character fails a Deception check, they can spend a Fate Point to ensure that no one can discover their lie for the rest of the scene. However, once the scene ends, the full effects of the failure come into play.

Many Faces: a character with this talent is so adept at deception that they can disguise themselves without needing any materials. They must make a Deception check at half skill. If it is successful, they no longer look like themselves; however, they cannot impersonate a specific target with this talent.

Never Lie to a Liar: a character with this talent can use Deception to detect whether someone is being less than truthful with them. They cannot discover what the truth is, they are just better at being able to recognise a lie when they hear one.

Stealth

Hide in Plain Sight: a character with this talent can attempt a Stealth check in situations where it might seem impossible to do so. This represents staying in blind spots, using the light sources to their advantage, body control, and so on. They must make the Stealth roll at half skill. If it is successful, they find a way to hide in the area.

Leave No Trace: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to be sure they left no trace of themselves or their party when making a Stealth check. They reseal doors, obscure footprints, and so on.

Now You See It…: a character with this talent can keep an object the size of a short sword or smaller hidden on their person. This talent turns others' Perception checks into a Clash against the character's Stealth.

Sneak Attack: a character with this talent is a master at striking from the shadows. If the character makes a successful Stealth check, they can inflict an extra 1d10 damage with any light or medium one-handed weapon.

Thievery

Needs No Tools: a character with this talent can attempt to pick any lock without having the available tools. They must make a Thievery roll at half skill. If it is successful, they pick the lock with whatever they have available.

Professional Paranoia: a character with this talent can attempt a Thievery roll against traps instead of a Dodge roll.

Fast Hands: a character with this talent can spend an additional Clash Point to incorporate a Thievery check into a Clash to steal something from their opponent. This is in addition to the normal outcome of the Clash.

Now You See It…: a character with this talent can keep an object the size of a short sword or smaller hidden on their person. This talent turns others' Perception checks into a Clash against the character's Stealth.

Trade

All that Glitters: a character with this talent is better at selling items to their marks. With a successful Trade check, the character can sell an item to a target for 100% of its market value, or 150% with a critical. The target must both desire the item and have the funds to purchase it.

Find Dealer: a character with this talent can always find a buyer for or seller of an item. They must make a Trade check at half skill. If they succeed, they find a buyer or seller, no matter where in the Zaharets that person might be. For example, it might be that the only purveyor of an item is in Ger. With this talent, the character can hear of this purveyor and know where to find them.

Friends in All Places: a character with this talent can use Trade to find an acquaintance or someone who has heard of them. This person is happy to help them in a variety of small ways, or give them good deals (15% off) on market goods.

Let Me See That: a character with this talent can detect the quality of an item by spending a Fate Point. This allows them to determine whether the item has positive or negative qualities, and how many. With a Trade check, they can even determine what those qualities are.

COMMON SKILL TALENTS

Craft

Field Fix: a character with this talent can attempt to make field repairs on weapons and armour. A successful check allows a Jackal to use the gear with only a –1 penalty instead of the usual –2.

Imbue with Fate: a character with this talent can imbue their crafted goods with Fate Points. When selecting this talent, the character chooses a single item to craft. When they wish to imbue an item with Fate, they must perform a Craft Item seasonal action, making their check at half skill. If the skill check is successful, they craft the item with 1 Fate Point. The crafting Jackal spends 1 Fate Point to create this item, which means their available Fate Points for the next adventure are reduced by 1. Anyone who possesses this item can use this Fate Point. It possesses 1 Fate Point per adventure.

Let Me See That: a character with this talent can detect the quality of an item by spending a Fate Point. This allows them to determine whether the item has positive or negative traits, and how many. With a Trade check, they can even determine what those traits are.

Master Crafter: a character with this talent can select a weapon or armour trait to apply when crafting a weapon, armour, or item. In the case of items, each trait increases the cost of producing the item by 25%. Note: Each trait is treated as an individual talent for each kind of weapon or armour. For example, if a character can add +1 damage to a sword, they must purchase this talent again to be able to apply it to a spear (e.g. Master Swordsmith or Master Spearcrafter). [Maximum 5.]

Drive

Faster!: a character with this talent, while travelling in a cart or chariot, only makes Survival checks every 15 days or fraction thereof.

Defensive Turn: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to increase their Protection by 3 for none round, which represents turning the cart or chariot so it absorbs some of the blow.

Run Them Down: a character with this talent is skilled at using their chariot to run down others or cut them down with their chariot's wheel blades. Increase the trample damage or damage from the blades by one step for each time this talent is selected: 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12 > 2d6 > 2d8 > 2d10. [Maximum 2]

War Charioteer: a character with this talent is adept at fighting in chariots and can use Drive in place of Dodge or Melee Combat during a Clash.

Influence

Defiant Challenge: a character with this talent is adept at grabbing their foe's attention. This talent increases the Clash Point cost of the Challenge action.

Trusted Servant: a character with this talent gains +10% to all rolls during the Patron seasonal action. [Maximum 3]

You Can Trust Me: a character with this talent can reduce the cost of the Carousing or Find Rumour seasonal action by 10 ss. [Maximum 3]

Well-known: when a character takes this talent, they increase their Kleos level by 2. This advancement stacks with other talents. [Maximum 3]

Perception

Always Listening: a character with this talent can always make a Perception check against Stealth checks, even if they are not actively listening. Jackals with this talent may make a second Perception check at half skill during Step 1 of combat to see whether they are surprised, if they failed their initial Perception check against an ambush..

Detect the Unseen: a character with this talent, when fighting invisible foes, can make a Perception check at half skill to pinpoint the foes' location for 2 Clash Points. If they succeed, they do not take any penalties to their attack.

Read Lips: a character with this talent can attempt to read the lips of those within line of sight. They must make a Perception check at half skill; if this check is successful, they are able to understand the conversation.

Well-sighted Strike: a character with this talent can add 2% of their Perception skill to their Ranged Combat damage. For example, +2 damage for a Perception score of 100%, +4 for 200%, and so on.

Perform

Create Great Work: with this talent, the character can compose an epic poem, great work, or rhetoric. When they take the Craft Item seasonal action, they make a Perform check instead of a Craft check. If it is successful, they create a great work. This has two effects. First, once per adventure, they gain an extra Fate Point to use when they recite part of their work. Additionally, their reputation goes up by 1.

Skillful Challenge: a character with this talent is adept at grabbing their foe's attention. This talent increases the Clash Point cost of the Challenge action by 1.

Skillful Oration: a character with this talent can captivate humanoid creatures who speak their language. They make a Perform check versus the Willpower of all listeners. On successful checks, the hearers are at –3 Clash Points. On a critical, they are at –5. On a critical versus a fumble, the target loses their action as they ponder what they heard.

Soothing Melody: a character with this talent can play captivating music that affects natural animals or magical creatures. They make a Perform check versus the Willpower of all listeners. On successful checks, the hearers are at –3 Clash Points. On a critical, they are at –5. On a critical versus a fumble, the target is lulled to sleep.

Ride

Faster!: a character with this talent, while travelling on a horse, only makes Survival checks every 15 days or fraction thereof.

Defensive Turn: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to increase their Protection by 2 for one round, which represents turning their horse so it absorbs some of the blow.

Skilled Rider: a character with this talent is a combatant from horseback. When attacking from horseback, they increase their damage from melee and ranged attacks by 1 for every 50% in Ride.

Trick Riding: a character with this talent can make a check at half skill to perform trick riding or a feat of impressive horsemanship.

Sail

At Home on The Water: a character with this talent can substitute Sailing for Survival while on the water.

Faster!: a character with this talent, while travelling in a boat or on a raft, only makes Survival checks every 20 days or fraction thereof.

Defensive Turn: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to increase their Protection by 3 for one round, which represents turning the boat or raft so it absorbs some of the blow.

Survival

Carry the Weaker: by spending a Fate Point, a character with this talent can mitigate the Mettle damage from fatigue taken by another player. They reduce the damage taken by 1. Either character can spend the Fate Point for this effect.

Resilient Spirit: a character with this talent is able to resist ambient Corruption better than others. Reduce Corruption gains from travel by 1. [Maximum 3]

Study Tracks: a character with this talent is able to gain more insight from tracks than others. In addition to discerning the direction and general type of creature, with a successful Survival skill check they are able to determine exact numbers, speed of travel, and the specific kind of creature they are tracking.

Used to the Trail: a character with this talent gains 1 Protection, which can only be applied to Mettle damage from Fatigue. [Maximum 2]

RITE TALENTS

General Rite Talents

A character can select any of the following talents when one of their rites hits 100%, or they can select a rite-specific talent from the 'Talent by Rite' section below (or one their rite provides).

Deeper Devotion: a character with this talent increases their Devotion Points by 5. [Maximum 4]

The Sight Beyond: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to attempt to receive a prophecy of the future. To do so, they must roll below their Devotion score. They can temporarily increase their Devotion by spending Devotion Points at a 1 for 1 expenditure.

EXAMPLE OF THE SIGHT BEYOND

Phamea has a Devotion of 18 and 26 Devotion Points. If she tries to see beyond, and spends 22 Devotion Points, her chance of success would be 40%.

Talents by Rite

Jackals must purchase these talents individually.

Imbue Rite: a character with this rite can imbue the rite in a token they create. This allows the holder of the item to invoke the rite once per day, with the item recharging at sunrise or sunset, whichever the Loremaster deems appropriate. The cost for imbuing the rite is 2 permanent Devotion Points, on top of the costs of the rite. For each additional time a Jackal selects this talent, the ritualist can increase the number of times per day the rite can be invoked by 1, at the cost of 1 additional permanent Devotion Point. [Maximum 4]

Deeper Reserves: a character with this talent can reduce the reserve cost of this rite by 1.

Potent Invocation: a character with this talent can apply their Devotion score on the Damage Bonus table to do extra damage with this rite.

The Price Paid: a character with this talent can invoke this rite without the ritual instruments at half skill.

Swift Invocation: a character with this talent reduces the Clash Point cost of the rite by 1.

FATE TALENTS

Jackals can purchase fate talents instead of skill talents. For example, if Becca's character Bet were to raise her Influence to 100%, she could decide to purchase a fate talent instead of an Influence talent.

In the Eye of Fate: a character with this talent has one additional Fate Point. [Maximum 2]

Better Lucky than Good: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point after a roll to increase their base skill by 10%.

Improve Awakened Item: a character with this talent can select a magic item they possess, then work with the Loremaster to add a magical effect to it, or improve an existing magical effect.

Speed of the Serpent: a character with this talent can spend a Fate Point to add 2 Clash Points to their pool for the round.

CHAPTER 7

GAZETTEER OF THE WAR ROAD

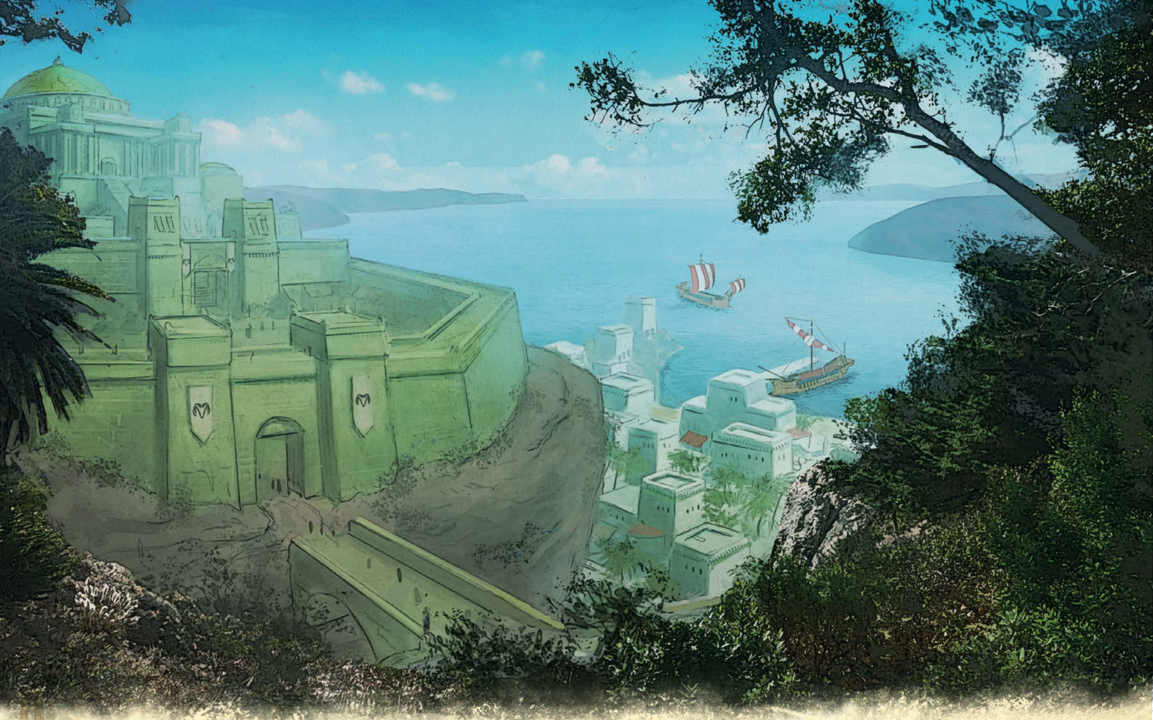
We call the coast between shining Ameena Noani and Jehumma's gap the War Road. Our oldest tablets tell us that bones beyond counting lie buried beneath its soft hills and green meadows, victims and victors of untold battles throughout the history of the Zaharets. The green plains of Aeco are verdant now because of the blood spilled there long ago. Ger, ruined Keta, the Grand Kingdoms: all travelled along the War Road. All traded in its bounty.

And what does that say about those who travel its ways these days? These Jackals, who scavenge the bones that lie below the surface of the land? They dig up the road's bounty, and feed their bellies with its grave knowledge and dead treasures. The Sars of Ameena Noani say we, the Luathi, are the inheritors of the Zaharets. If that is the case, then the Jackals inherit the War Road.

I fear the truth is that all Jackals travel the War Road, no matter where in the land they roam.

~Kabidit, Hasheer of the Scriptorium~

The War Road is a stretch of coast in the Zaharets that runs from the Vori Wastes in the north to the Aeco Plains in the south, nearly 500 miles in total. This gazetteer focuses on the northern and southern regions of the War Road, but that leaves miles of coast for villages, ruins, monster lairs, and other encounters for Jackals who wander its length. This chapter begins with an overview of the ends of the War Road, the areas of Ameena Noani and Sentem. Then, there is a section for the Loremaster, with additional information and plot hooks for each location mentioned.



THE NORTHERN REACHES: AMEENA NOANI AND ITS ENVIRONS

I love the smell of this city. Sometimes it is so strong it covers the damned salt of the sea. Pressed flesh, coin, cattle, and blood. The smells of home. In this land of barbarians, it is enough to make a man homesick for the west! But alas, some doors…

Oh, and the sounds. Araton be praised! The din of the slaves, merchants, and you people. Merchants hawking their wares, priests their gods, beggars their plight. All the coins of the east flow through this, the City of the Bulls, the greatest city this side of the Colonies. Look at these walls! Impossible stone set on impossible stone. You can see all the way to Kroryla from up here.

Bah. The walls of the city contain all you people. Barbarians the lot of you. Traujah, Luathah, even the filthy Gerah. All here, all making deals, all down there, trading fleas as if you all are the same phule. And come Udaqara, you all cheer for me! Red! Red! Red!

~Nikos, Warrior of Ryla and current Red champion of the Grand Track, boasting atop the Serpent Gate~

Ameena Noani lies at the mouth of the Asa Amwa, at the northern end of the War Road. The Vori Wastes spread out to the north, and the coastal plains to the south. Ameena Noani served as the main city of the Luathi during the Uprising, and has served as the centre of the Luathi culture since then. The Scriptorium of the Hasheers, the Temple to the Lord of Dawn, and the bulk of the Luathi military power is all centred here. Unlike Sentem to the south, the Takan have not threatened Ameena Noani in over five decades.

The Sars of Ameena Noani rule from the old hestul buildings located in the Plaza of the Three Bulls. Phamea, the current Sari, has led Ameena Noani into a season of prosperity. Under her leadership, the garrisons at Orsem Honess and Yahan are back to full strength, and the forts stand ready to guard the Law of Men. Sari Phamea also increased trade by sponsoring caravans into the Luasa Desert and Kroryla.

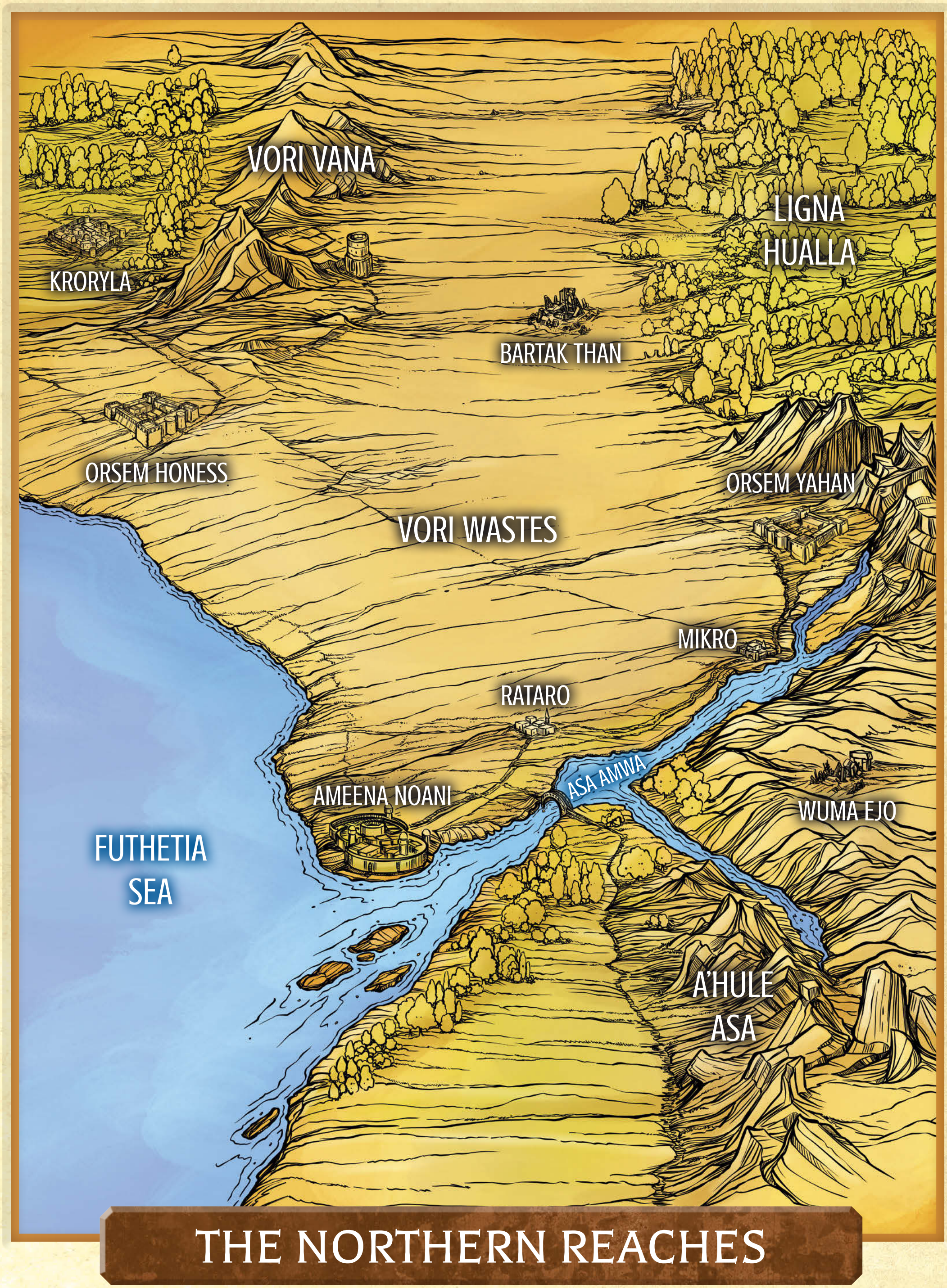
HISTORY

Following the revolt against Barak Barad, the Luathi began to reestablish their rule in the Zaharets. The first task they set themselves to was rebuilding the ruins of Ameena Noani, which had served as a refuge for the Luathi during Shumma's Uprising. The Takan had shunned the ruins, and the green stone of the streets, tunnels, and walls provided the foundations for a new centre of Luathi culture.

Although Shumma sought to lead the Luathi south after they won their freedom, most opted to stay in the lands that they knew; thus began the founding years. With Shumma gone, the people turned to Nehanu, who was a great leader and Shumma's second-in-command, to lead them in this endeavour. While they repaired the walls of Ameena Noani, the people held off the attacks of the Takan tribes that still dwelt in the plains. Gradually, year by year, the power of the city grew, and its people threw the beasts further and further back. Eventually, the Sars of Ameena Noani granted enough security that other towns began to spring up around it. Soon, the Sars sent Jackals to clear the old orsems of the wastes, and then populated it with their men. As the old forts grew, the influence of the Law of Alwain grew further still.

RECENT EVENTS

Sari Phamea came to power six years ago, after the assassination of Sar Nasim. She has guided Ameena Noani to its current power and stability. She encourages the Hasheer Scriptorium to sponsor searches for lost knowledge. She extends aid and protection to the surrounding towns, and has recently begun sending Jackals into the wastes to see what hidden ruins, lore, or secrets might be salvageable for use within the Law of Alwain.


THE NORTHERN REACHES
VORI VANA
LIGNA HUALLA
KRORYLA
BARTAK THAN
ORSEM HONESS
ORSEM YAHAN
VORI WASTES
MIKRO
RATARO
ASA AMWA
AMEENA NOANI
WUMA EJO
FUTHETIA SEA
A'HULE ASA

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Ameena Noani, Point of the Bulls: this city is the largest human settlement in the Zaharets. It is home to the majority of the Luathi clan leaders, the Scriptorium of the Hasheers, the Temple of Alwain, and the Plaza of the Three Bulls. Its cyclopean walls are visible from miles away on the coastal plains, and it stands as a beacon of civilisation. Its outriders patrol the wastes and the roads, and its people man the orsems.

- *Plaza of the Three Bulls:* standing at the centre of the city are three great bull statues – one of silver, one of gold, and one of bronze. Fresh, clean water pours out of their mouths, and flows into the canals of the city. The Hasheers of the Scriptorium have stated that Ameena Noani is a phrase in an older tongue meaning 'point' or 'place' of the bulls. Merchants and vendors fill the large plaza that surrounds the fountains each day.
- *The Scriptorium:* the great citadel of the Hasheers is a magnificent structure built using all the knowledge now contained the Scriptorium. Travellers can see its shining copper domes rising over the green walls of Ameena Noani. Within, all the knowledge accumulated by the Hasheers and Jackals lies deep underground in specially curated vaults. Towers of clay tablets are carefully transcribed; all the information, rites, and history of the Hasheers and the Zaharets.
- *The Fortress of Gilead:* when the Luathi first hid in the ruins of Ameena Noani, Gilead was the heart of Shumma's Uprising. It was built from the same strange seastone as the walls that surrounded the city. Once Nehanu took over, the Sars of Ameena Noani restored the fortress' interior and made it their seat.
- *The Grand Track:* the Sars built a large chariot track within the walls of the city. Chariot races are popular with the Luathi, and two great stables of teams – the Red and the Blue – race each month. Groups of supporters rally to their favourite teams, and fights have been known to break out after an especially brutal match.

Bartak Than: this once great Takan city now lies in ruins after the Luathi overthrew it in the final days of the Uprising. They razed it to the ground with holy fire: or at least that is what the stories say. The Luathi patrol the ruins twice a year to ensure no Takan attempt to raise its walls again. Yet somehow, the Takan always return to the site. A few Hasheers believe there are tunnels under the city that extend into the Vori Wastes.

Kroryla: 40 years ago, the Melkoni established their eastern-most colony. This small city sits on the western edge of the Zaharets and is quietly growing larger as it serves as a trade gate between the east and west. The Melkoni bring goods, gods, and philosophies from their lands, as well as darker cults of mysterious intent. Their envoys can be seen throughout the northern Zaharets, trading, negotiating, or seeking treasures of gold and lore in the wastes.

- *Temple of Ryla:* here, the blade dancers of the goddess train. They heal the sick, treat the wounded with water from the sacred pools, and carry out the judgements of the city.
- *Halls of Lykos:* the seat of the government of Kroryla, as well as a public forum where travelling and local philosophers meet to debate and teach.

Ligna Hualla: the province of Umbalna, the Forest King. People say a spirit of great power rules over the Ligna Hualla forest, one that walked the world when man was new to the Zaharets and the Hann were old. It is a being of puissance, as the Ligna Hualla resists encroachment from the Vori Wastes, the Luasa Desert, and the Desolation of Keta.

By ancient treaty, the words of which are now known only to Umbalna, the Luathi can harvest wood from the edges of the forest, but no further. A simmering anger pulses from the heart of the forest and burns in the eyes of the servants of the Forest King. Umbalna itself exudes an aura of menace, and only the foolish and desperate approach it.

Luasa Desert: this vast desert of bronze sand stretches from the eastern slopes of the A'hule Asa to the iron gates of Mouadah. Claimed by no power, many creatures roam it. The Trauj and the Takan call it home. The sands hide much of the history of the Zaharets; Hulathi ruins from the Grand Kingdoms, Hannic and Mouadran outposts, and even older structures lie buried out of sight. Their existence is known only to the Trauj, and the Takan they hunt.

- *Ruins of Wuma Arron:* on the northwestern edge of the Luasa stands a strange set of ruins, which the Arrow Clan of the Trauj use as a caravanserai. There, many Luathi caravans meet with the desert clans to trade, negotiate, and hire Trauj warriors.
- *Red Snakes:* the northern edge of the Luasa is the territory of the Red Snake Takan. Baruk, a vicious Oritakan, leads the Red Snake. He has gathered many Takan and begun harassing caravans coming into the Luasa Desert.

Mikro: the farthest town east of Ameena Noani, Mikro lies in the shadow of Orsem Yahan and enjoys its protection. Mikro sits along the only ford across the Asa Amwa, and as such is the departure point for most journeys into the Wuma Ejo or the Luasa Desert. The defensive walls of the town are formed by the walls of the outer buildings, supplemented where necessary, and guarded by a four-chambered gate. Takan branded with a red serpent often raid the town from the Wuma Ejo.

- *The Altar on the Hill:* Mikro has a small altar to Alwain, tended by Kahar Namar.
- *Yatunit's House:* a home that once held a prosperous family, which has now fallen on challenging times. Yatunit's husband and sons were killed in a Takan raid. Yatunit has opened her home to Jackals and travellers, who can spend the night for the cost of a few shekels of copper.

Orsem Honess and Orsem Yahan: Sar Nasim's predecessor resettled these two ancient forts to hold back the Takan of the Vori Wastes. Their seastone walls stand inviolate to time, and the Luathi have found them to be impregnable against the assaults of the Takan. The Sars of Ameena Noani have set permanent watches in the forts to guard the eastern and western reaches of their domain. Each fort has thrived, and they are now host to small settlements within their walls.

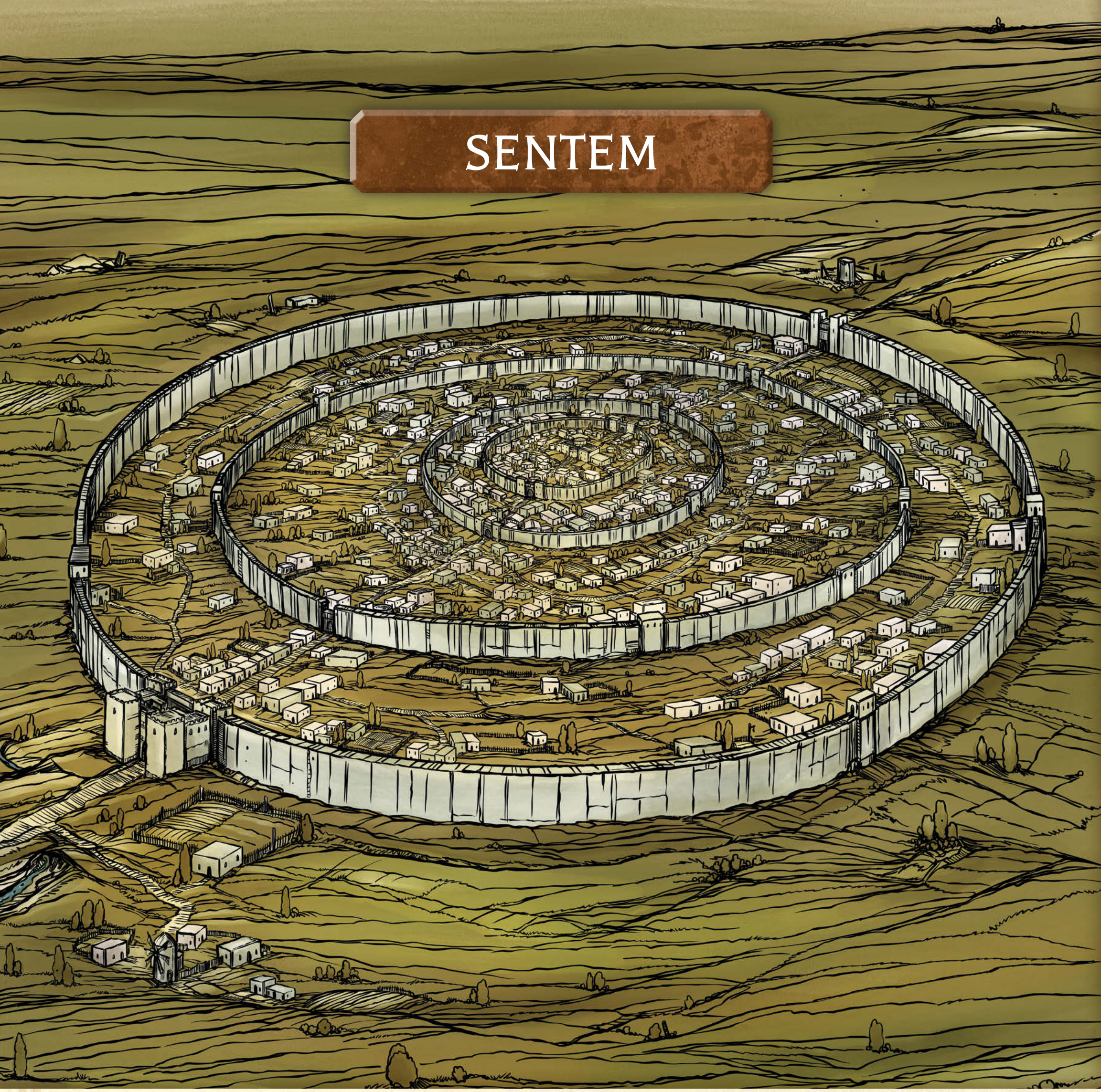
Orsem Ven: Sari Phamea, recognising the value of the minerals within the Vori Vana, commissioned Orsem Ven two years ago. The small fort is Luathi-made, but painted to resemble the seastone ruins. Ven is a fortified mining town, whose first batches of copper, tin, and stone have begun to flow into Orsem Honess.

Rataro: Rataro is the fourth town to be built on this site. Hasheers visit the 'vaults' here, an ancient series of now-subterranean rooms, searching for insights into the Luathi of old. Rataro sits on the crossroads between Ameena Noani, Sentem, and Orsem Yahan. The great Hannic bridge spans the Asa Amwa here, seemingly immutable to the ravages of time and men.

The Vori Wastes: the Wastes are a vast plain of dead grey ash and sand. Some Hasheers believe the Desolation of Keta caused the Wastes; others believe some great battle took place there long ago. Either way, the land is lifeless. What plants do grow there are stunted and toxic. Takan tribes, fouled from living in the Wastes for generations, roam the dunes. No one would normally choose to enter the Vori Wastes, yet Luathi soldiers dutifully patrol it to keep the Takan and other creatures far from the Law of Alwain. Sari Phamea has begun to send patrols deeper and deeper into the Wastes in the hope of discovering a way to purchase back the lands of her ancestors.

RUMOURS

- *Something lies beneath the fountain of the Three Bulls. Something from before the creation of Barak Barad.*
- *Travellers have seen Nehushta along the road between Mikro to Orsem Yahan.*
- *Sari Phamea is hiring various groups of Jackals and sponsoring them to seek out something in the Wastes.*
- *Many have seen the great shape of a dark serpent flying over the Vori Wastes. They say the creature fled from the Ligna Hualla.*
- *The last Sar was not only murdered but slain in a dark ritual of Mouathenic power.*
- *Envoys from Kroryla have been reaching out to the Sari, seeking a stronger relationship between the two cities.*
- *The clansmen of the Luasa Desert have been accosting caravans. The survivors say they are claiming supplies under an ancient treaty.*
- *The bodies of eight Hasheers have turned up dead in the Scriptorium, each with a single black coin in their mouth.*
- *The spirits of the Ligna Hualla, in service of Lord Umbalna, are attacking people from Orsem Yahan who venture into the edges of the forest. This stands in violation of the old laws and agreements.*
- *Slavers have been sighted in and around Orsem Yahan. They raid caravans headed into the Luasa Desert. The Nawsi of the Orsem wants to find their camp and recover both the people and the supplies.*
- *Melkoni refugees have begun to arrive in Kroryla, speaking of a great war in the west.*



THE SOUTHERN REACHES: SENTEM AND THE PLAINS OF AECO

When I crested the hill, I thought it to be Sentem. Green walls rising around silver towers, foaled against the greatest cliffs I have ever witnessed. They told me I was a fool, that was no city. It was the tomb of the sea. A dead place, sealed against the travels of Ohoness. A forsaken place. The beauty of death.

Sentem is a place for these soft folk. Homes foaled tightly together, sheltered against wolves and beasts. Densom even more so, with their stone walls to keep the Retakan away from their children, and their lit walls that drive off the dark but blind those who huddle behind them. Soft places for soft people.

Still, they must have some strength. They live in the shadow of the serpent's nest. It squats there, an open wound, festering new beasts. The son of their chief will soon ride into the serpent's nest. He will need strength to cleanse his lands. He will need me, Aldeshi-halan, daughter of Kanan, Alkitar of the Arrow Clan. I will lead these soft folk down the serpent's throat to choke it.

~Aldeshi-halan, Trauj sellsword and traveller along the War Road~

The Plains of Aeco lie at the southern end of the War Road, between the sea and the A'hule Asa mountains where the city of Sentem and the town of Densom lie. The Aeco woods stretch to the south, providing the two settlements with plenty of wood, herbs, and resins. The ruins of the Takan citadel are a blight upon the region, and the Yesim family clears the ruins every year with a host of the mighty. Two of the ancient orsems, forts of a lost age, stand in the plains, but Sentem has yet to claim them. Perhaps the strangest feature of the region is the sealed city of Ouwa Ejo, an inviolate city made of the same green seastone as the orsems.

Due to their proximity to Ger, the cities and towns in the Plains of Aeco enjoy trade and contact with the Gerwa, and there are a considerable number of Gerwa in the settlements on the plains. The Yesim family has eyes on consolidating the plains under their protection, but needs Jackals to help make this a reality. They want someone to deal with the Undead, the Takan tribes, and the Nephilim of the mountains so the Law of Alwain can be established across the plains.

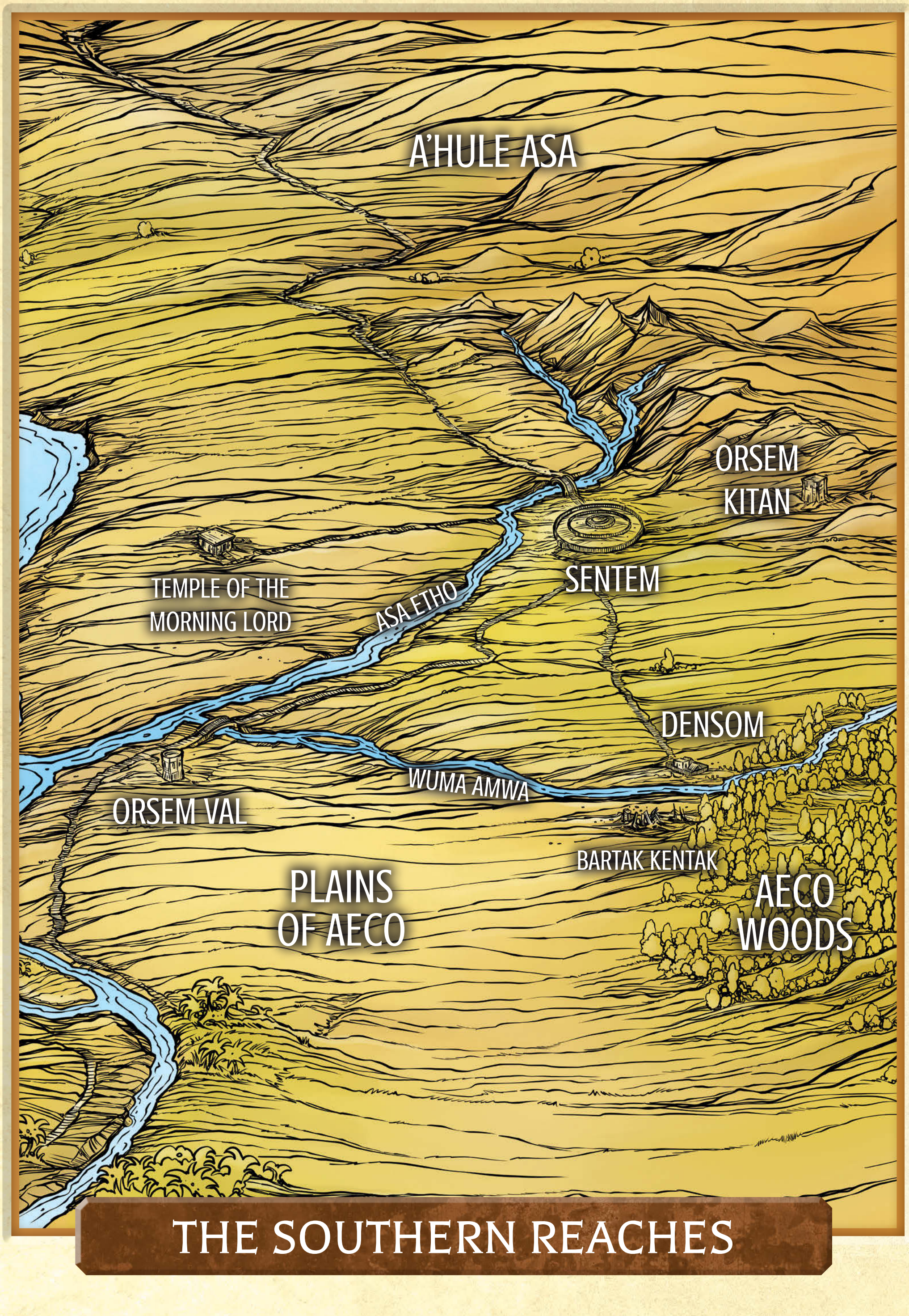
HISTORY

Following the revolt against the Kingdom of Ignorance, the Luathi began to re-establish a homeland in the Zaharets. The Plains of Aeco lay fallow, with no real human presence for nearly a century. Then, Yesim, the outcast son of a powerful prince in Ameena Noani, led his followers south and established a fort within the shadow of the mountains. Slowly, Yesim's followers pushed the Black Tree tribe of Takan who held the plains back into the mountains. As the town grew, Yesim's men discovered many ruins across the plains, ruins dating back before the rule of the Takan.

The town of Sentem eventually grew large enough to clear the Takan out of Bartak Kentak, and establish a second town in the plains; Densom. Densom quickly grew, as Aeco Wood provided the area with much-needed resources. Thanks to Gerwa settlers and those from the north who wished to leave Ameena Noani's shadow, Sentem and Densom have continued to steadily grow.

RECENT EVENTS

Currently, Jepesh ben Yesim rules in Sentem, the current heir to the Yesim holdings. In his 60s, Jepesh is slowly wasting away from a strange illness. His adviser, Kahar Nabal, is fearful that he has fallen under a curse. Because of this, and the recent raids from Undead in Sentem and Takan in Densom, Sameel, Jepesh's second son and heir, has begun welcoming Jackals to Sentem to deal with the issues plaguing his father's land.


A'HULE ASA
ORSEM
KITAN
SENTEM
TEMPLE OF THE
MORNING LORD
ASA ETHO
DENSOM
WUMA AMWA
ORSEM VAL
BARTAK KENTAK
PLAINS
OF AECO
AECO
WOODS

THE SOUTHERN REACHES

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS

Aeco Wood: the northern tip of the Green Wood begins in the Aeco Plains. The hamlet of Densom sits on its edge, a settlement of woodcutters and lumber workers that keep to the outskirts of the forest, felling its terebinths, cedars, and scattered sycamores. The forest is the area's primary source of acalana, a major ingredient in healing resins. The Aeco is a haunted wood travelled by Takan and worse.

- *The Foetid Pit:* hunters have come across a charnel pit in the woods, a deep crevice filled with the bones of men, Takan, and the animals of the forest. They have no idea who is filling the pit, or why.
- *Corpse Flowers:* the deeper you go into the woods, the more you finds the choking vines of the corpse flowers. With their deep purple blossoms that smell of rotted meat, the flowers slowly choke the life out of the smaller trees of the woods. They grow more prevalent and larger the closer you get to the heart of the forest.

Bartak Kentak: the old Takan holding in the area that the Luathi burned to the ground almost two centuries ago. The militia goes in twice a year to keep it clear, and Nabal aids them with the power of Alwain. Most people give it a wide berth due to fear of the White Mark plague.

Densom: a small hamlet of woodcutters, apothecaries, and crafters on the edge of the Aeco. Led by Sari Avi, they harvest wood, herbs, and resins from the Aeco Wood. The resins of the Aeco trees are a prime ingredient in local healing poultices. Currently, Takan from the Aeco that bear the mark of the black tree are harassing the town. It is unclear whether a new tribe has appropriated the symbol, or whether it is the tribe Yesim claimed to have destroyed.

- *Sari Avi's Home:* the Sari of Densom's home acts as the village's place of law. Sari mediates disputes, while her husband, Binur, tends to wounded and creates herbal remedies for the people of Densom and the surrounding sheepherders and farmers.

Ouwa Ejo: these ruins are not of Luathi, Gerwa, or Takan make. While the city inside is clearly ruined, the walls of pale green stone still stand inviolate, and its silvered gates are sealed by powerful rites.

Orsem Kitan and Orsem Val: two ancient watchtowers found on the Plains of Aeco. Kitan is the mountain watchtower, while Val watches the sea. Sentem and the Yesim family have laid claim to these towers in name only. They do not have the people to clear and man them; however, Sameel has plans to hire Jackals to do both. He then plans to restore their interiors to the best of his abilities, and man them with trusted Jackals or warriors in his service. Near Orsem Kitan, there are old mines that might still contain much-needed tin.

Sentem: home to the Yesim line. Nestled near the A'hule Asa, the walled city houses nearly 5,000 souls. In addition to Jepesh and his family, the fort houses the small personal fighting force of the Yesim. It is also home to a Hasheer of Ameena Noani, Arishat. The villagers are slowly reclaiming the fertile land of the Plains of Aeco, despite their recent troubles. At night, they all lock themselves in their homes, for fear of the roaming dead.

- *Shrine to Alwain:* kept by Kahar Azor, this is a small temple. Azor is a kindly Kahar but advancing in years. He worries about Nabal, who is, in his opinion, far too haughty for a Kahar, and has his eye on Dabar to replace him as Kahar of Sentem. Dabar is a youth whom Alwain has called to the life of a Jackal, but Azor sees potential in the young man. Everyone in the Plains of Aeco know the story of how the sheepherder Dabar found his bronze armour and shield hanging from a tree and heard the voice of Alwain call to him.

- *Yesim Fortress:* although Sentem now has multiple rings of walls, the military might of the Sars is in the original fortress of Yesim. It stands within the walls of Sentem, housing the Yesim family, the mighty warriors who follow them, Arishat the Hasheer, and Jepesh and his son Sameel. Sameel has opened some of the rooms in the fort to Jackals who have proven themselves to him.
- *The City Gate:* the four-chamber gate is located on the south side of Sentem and is attached to the latest ring of walls. Here, the elders of the city come to share their wisdom, discuss the plains, and adjudicate routine matters. Ba-en Nafar, a Gerwa who has become a close friend and steward of Sameel, often oversees the elders and hands out his lord's missions to Jackals. Ba-en is also the man to see about claiming the bounty on Takan heads – 5 copper shekels per head.

Temple of the Morning Lord: built by the hands of the Sea Peoples, Yesim and his son refurbished the ancient temple and dedicated it to Alwain. The temple provides shelter and aid for the Sentem and the surrounding area. The current high priest is Nabal, son of Nefalst.

RUMOURS

- *A group of local children disappeared by Orsem Val. Their tracks led to a cave, which seems to run under the river.*
- *A farmer spotted a family of Nephilim in the foothills of the A'hule Asa.*
- *The Sari of Densom says she knows what is behind the Takan attacks.*
- *Travellers witnessed spectres in and around Orsem Val.*
- *The gates of Ouwa Ejo were sealed before the fall of the city.*
- *Sameel seeks a way to break his father's curse.*
- *Jepesh is not long for this world, and, when he dies, the curse will raise him as one of the dead.*
- *Packs of Wolves harass the caravans headed south from Ameena Noani.*
- *An ancient Gerwan curse lingers over the whole of the Plains of Aeco.*
- *A piece of the moon road lies somewhere in the area, but one can only see it on nights of the full moon.*
- *There is a powerful spirit hidden within the Aeco Wood. It is the source of the Corruption.*
- *The Takan seek something within the ruins of Bartak Kentak.*
- *The bones of men and other stranger creatures emerge from the cliff faces along the beach each night to haunt the plains.*
- *There is more tin in the A'hule Asa mountains; tin that can make bronze and defend the people of Sentem.*

SECRETS OF THE WAR ROAD

Aeco Woods

The Aeco Woods stretch for dozens of miles to the south of the Aeco Plains. The wealth of Sentem is partially due to the forest's vast stores of wood, herbs, and fruit. However, like much of the southern plains, there is a struggle to extract the bounty of the woods. The people of Densom make their living harvesting the wood, most of which they keep and work into the tools and items they need for their town; the rest is shipped off to Sentem.

The Aeco Woods hold two great secrets. First, there is yet one Aeco ayal left alive. The ayal were a type of small deer with green skin, which lived in the forest. The stories say that if you approached an ayal with a sincere need in your heart, the ayal would grant your wish. This requires that the person cut the ayal's still beating heart from its chest and burn it as a sacrifice. If the ritual was correctly enacted, the ayal would peacefully give up its heart, and would be reborn from a tree at the heart of the forest after a year and a day. However, the Takan have hunted the ayal for many years. Only Sari Avi knows of the location of the final ayal, and she will defend this knowledge with her life. Only if the need was great, and if someone knew the ancient rite, would she reveal where she believes a Jackal might find the ayal.

The second secret is the existence of the Daughter Beneath the Earth. This powerful Mouathenic was bound beneath the earth of the woods many centuries ago, as punishment for dealing with the forces of Chaos. The Hulathi of the region buried her alive, then left her for dead. However, they underestimated her power, and the Daughter has carved out a palace for herself beneath the earth of the Aeco Woods. There, she has summoned creatures from the Silent Lands, along with those mortals she can reach, to attend her. She cannot leave, for the wards of the Hulathi are potent even after all this time. However, she still seeks to find a way to become free and roam the Plains of Aeco once more. Should that happen, a terrible power from the ancient world would descend upon Sentem.

Ameena Noani

Ameena Noani is the height of the Luathi culture. Thanks to the presence of the Hasheer, the Temple to Alwain, and the Fortress of Gilead, little has troubled the Luathi there over the past 100 years. The Sars of Gilead have extended their control of the region by developing and protecting the trade routes between Kroryla and Orsem Yahan. All trade in the north passes through their gates, and with it, the wealth of the Zaharets. The city itself thrives on its copper mines (to the south in the A'hule Asa), and its access to arsenic in the Vori Wastes. These make the foundries of Ameena Noani among the most prolific in the region. They produce tin/copper bronze, although this relies on the tin trade with the Melkoni. Sari Phamea established Orsem Ven in the hope that tin and gold would be found in the mountains to the north and lead to a major mine for them. Ameena Noani's city-state lacks tin and a ready supply of hard woods, both of which Sentem has in abundance. This is one of the many reasons why Phamea is looking south with the intent of annexing Sentem.

However, Ameena Noani holds two great secrets. Beneath the city's streets, lanes and sewers, lie older ruins. There, in the depths of the vaults, lies a dark secret out of the east. The original dwellers of the city took a piece of the Iron Gate of Mouadah and hid it beneath the city, never expecting it to fall. The gate piece now lies there, sheltered by wards unknown and unknowable to the citizens above, yet sought after by terrors from the east.

Secondly, Sari Phamea is preparing for war. Visions of onyx thrones and serpent shadows are troubling her dreams. She believes Ameena Noani will be threatened with destruction in her lifetime, and so she prepares vigilantly for that day. Throughout the city are caches of weapons, and ever does her eye turn to the south. Phamea believes that only united can the Luathi weather this storm, and plans to bring Sentem into her hegemony, whether its people are willing to join her or not.

Bartak Kentak

The old Takan ruins are a blight on the plains. Small, squat walls stand black against the green as one looks south. Mists that rise off the river nearly always shroud the dark ruins, cloaking everything in a misdirecting fog. Nawsi Sameel dutifully keeps up his father's work of clearing out the ruins every year. The fighting is always fierce, but the people of the plains continue to stymie the Takan's efforts to build a massive horde. Sameel has plans to further raze the area, but his father's illness currently preoccupies him.

Bartak Kentak holds two great secrets. First, the Takan keep coming back because they have excavated a deep network of caves beneath the city. The Sar's men and women routinely kill a token force left above ground to allay suspicions. But beneath the ground, the Takan are breeding, and soon the Oritakan believe they will have enough numbers to sweep out and destroy Sentem and Densom. The Takan are eager to once again enslave the people of the plains.

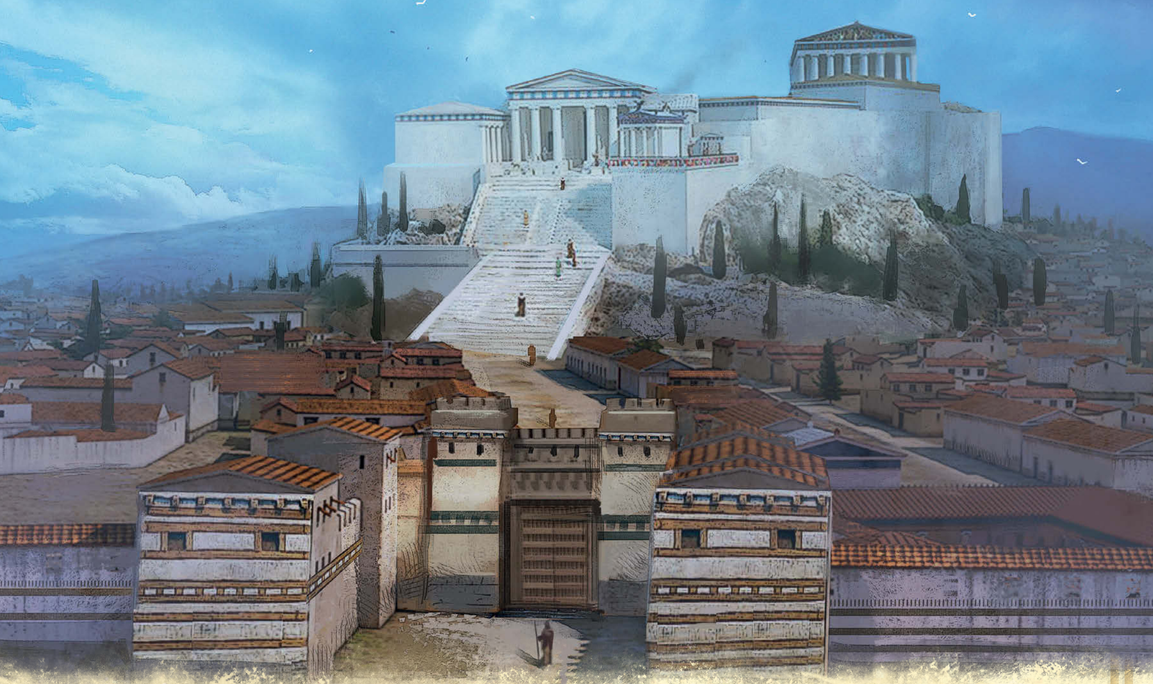
Second, the Daughter Beneath the Earth has contacted the Takan. She is pushing for them to abandon the ruin and dwell with her in the forest for the time being. She has sent the Oritakan of Bartak Kentak many gifts of power to try to sway them to her side. Some of the Oritakan have joined her, while others remain wary. It is possible the Takan might fall into war over this, or that one side will strike and wipe out their rivals to unify the tribe.

Bartak Than

The former capital of the Takan Kingdom is in ruins. This once-powerful city conquered and crushed the Luathi people until the time of the Uprising. Now it sits, a squat black silhouette, in the lifeless expanse of the Vori Wastes. Its black walls and buildings appear melted, as if some great conflagration raged and burned even the stones of the city. During the day, and even on most nights, the ruin lies silent, a pall hanging over its vast emptiness.

However, Bartak Than holds two great secrets. First, the Hasheers are correct. There are breeding pens for Takan deep beneath the city. When Shumma's fire fell and razed the city, it slew the majority of the Takan, but some have eked out an existence in the foul caves beneath the city. There, Nazal Droog, an ancient Oritakan, rules all the Takan tribes of the north under the banner of the Red Serpent. Nazal Droog has survived in these caves since the fall of Bartak Than by communing with a Rathic known as First Tearing of Flesh. This Rathic has kept Nazal Droog alive far past its normal lifespan, and the Oritakan's flesh is failing as it slowly slides into undeath and madness.

Second, within the ruins of the city is a map to one of the temple-retreats of the ancient Priest-Kings of Mouadah. Were Nazal Droog to discover its existence, his Takan would scour the city to find it. The vile rites, artefacts, or worse that are likely to lie in this private refuge of an ancient depravity would only strengthen the Takan and the Rathic they serve.



Densom

The small town of Densom provides Sentem with lumber, medicine, and fruit in exchange for protection and grains. Densom draws ever tighter to Sar Jepesh's city. Led for the last 50 years by Sari Avi, the town has prospered despite its close proximity to the Aeco Woods and Bartak Kentak. Sheepherders tend to large flocks in the plains to the north, and some small farms line the northern bank of the river.

Densom holds two great secrets. First, Sari Avi is aware of the growth of the corpse flowers and what might be causing it. She also knows the location of the last ayal. Her belief is that one could take the heart from the ayal and seek the Foetid Pit to renew the ayal, spreading these creatures throughout the forest once again. However, she fears for her life for possessing this knowledge. She believes something actively works to keep the secrets of the forest for themselves, and does not speak of this to Jackals she does not trust.

Second, Gan, one of the woodsmen of the town, has fallen into Corruption. It began when a group of Jackals rescued him from a Takan attack. As a reward, he let them stay with him whenever they were in town. One of the Jackals found some mouahalan coins, and carelessly gave them to Gan, who fell under their addictive sway. Soon, Gan began to open his home to other Jackals, for the price of shekels, preferably in the form of the black coins. Gan does not realize that his mind is a beacon on the dream road for anyone with the power and knowledge to seek him out. These powers routinely strip the knowledge he gains from the Jackals who stay with him from his sleeping mind. These visits leave Gan exhausted and irritable, and they are happening with greater frequency. It is not known who is using the poor man as an unwitting spy.

Kroryla

Kroryla (or the town of Ryla) is the Melkoni gate to the War Road. It is a haven for the refugees who flee the wars of the west, a centre for philosophical discourse, and a trademeet that brings the wealth and resources of the west to the Zaharets. Tin, white metal, and bronze weapons flow east, while copper, gold, and silver head west. The city itself harvests wood, herbs, and other reagents from the forests around it. They make no forays into the mountains, though, due to Ameena Noani's claim on the mines. Kroryla, through the Warriors of Lykos, negotiated multiple trade agreements and alliances with Ameena Noani. Sari Phamea and Glykera met numerous times and developed a mutual respect.

However, Kroryla holds two great secrets. First, Glykera received word from the west that the war among the western city-states of Mykinos, Sepharakati, and Krarata grows fiercer. Every month, more refugees flow east. Glykera fears the outcome of the war, for it might mean Melkoni expansion to the east. This means Kroryla must enlarge its holdings within the next 5 years. She is already scouting out more territory to claim, and looks to the mountains as a defensible position for a new town.

Secondly, there are rumours of giants in the woods and mountains around Kroryla. They are Children of Ceenon, who seek to restore the Daughters of Ceenon, the trio turned to stone long ago by the warrior Lykos. Melkoni report seeing large shapes roaming near the walls of the city at night, seemingly to study the statues there. Should someone find a way to awaken the Daughters, it is doubtful Kroryla would survive their fury.

Ligna Hualla

This forest is home to the mighty Forest King known as Umbalna. Under its wise and powerful guidance, the Ligna remains a holy place, fey and resistant to the wars and powers of the world. The forest and Umbalna have stood since before humanity's arrival in the Zaharets, and will exist long after humanity fades from the world. The Hasheers say Umbalna's power is tied to Kalypsis, and will only fade when the world ends. Through long-standing treaties from before the time of the Uprising, the outer edge of the forest is available for harvest, although something has changed within the past three years that causes the forest to rise against all humans who enter it.

The Ligna Hualla holds two great secrets. First, the Forest King's treaty with humanity is predicated on humanity's defence of the heart of the forest. Recently, something awoke a dark power within its borders, and Umbalna now wars with an ancient spirit. This spirit is a Priest-King of Mouadah, and as such the forest now strikes out against all humanity. Should Jackals find a way to speak with the Forest King, they might be able to aid it and reopen the Ligna to the Zaharets.

Second, the ruins of a Mouadah temple lie buried on the far eastern edge of the Ligna. Umbalna's forest destroyed this outpost of evil centuries ago at the behest of its Hulathi allies. The forest grew 15 miles of new trees overnight to swallow that place. However, recent events, caused by Nawsi Namar's activities, have awakened the spirit of the Priest-King, and it seeks to free its place of power from the hold of the Forest King.

Luasa Desert

Home of the Trauj clans, the Luasa carries as much history and ruin as the War Road. It held the kingdoms of the Hann, the Hulathi, and the Mouadah; was the battlefield of the last great apocalypse; and was once a fertile plain. The battles of the past left scars upon the face of the world, and the Luasa is one of the greatest. Yet, the Trauj thrive in this harsh desert. They gather their clans on the shores of Anahaluf, the Well of the World. They trade with the soft folk beyond the Spine of the World for good bronze weapons, as well as fruits and grains. The Trauj in return trade livestock (goats and camels) and the weaker horses from their stock. They also trade leather goods which the clans have crafted, as Trauj-made leather is beautifully stamped or burned.

The Luasa Desert holds two great secrets. First, there are Hannic mansions among the eastern ridges of the A'hule Asa. The Hann sealed their mansions' ancient gates during the fall of the Grand Kingdoms, and few know what became of the Hann of Suranu Amroleth. However, those blessed by the ancestors might yet find these outposts. There is one hidden in the mountains not far from Anahaluf.

Second, Alkitar on the eastern edge of the desert report a new migration of Takan. The Alkitar harass these Takan, but their numbers continue to grow. However, scouts among the Serpent Ruins have not seen any Takan. The beasts seem to cross Thulen Almazim, the great river, and disappear. Some of the scouts believe they are abandoning the desert, while others think they seek to regroup in the shadow of the Serpent's Standard and return to war against the Trauj in greater force.

Mikro

Mikro, like the nearby town of Rataro, has a high number of Melkoni settlers. Mikro's walls command ownership of the Red Ford, the only ford over the Asa Amwa. This makes Mikro a trading point with the northern clans of the Trauj. The clay of the Red Ford is exceptional for building; once shaped and dried out, it forms the dried bricks that are one of the key exports of Mikro. Additionally, the abundant fish of the Asa Amwa and the minerals panned from the river supplement the income of the town, which is primarily supported by the herds of oxen and sheep in the surrounding hills. Mikro's proximity to Orsem Yahan provides it with a nominally larger group of fighting folk than a town of its size would normally hold. The Nawsi of Yahan sends his soldiers to rest and recuperate in Mikro, ensuring that there are always extra arms to swing bronze should the occasion arise. Mikro buys much of its grain from Rataro, a situation that has started to stress relations between the two towns.

Mikro holds a great secret. It is under siege from within and without. Many months ago, a young man from the town named Leodias travelled north, seeking a lost sheep. There, he discovered and entered a recently uncovered ancient ruin. He contacted something beneath the sand, and its power shredded his sanity. After Leodias returned, he began to slowly bring his friends and family to the ruin. Some fell under the ancient evil's sway, while others resisted and are now held prisoner. Soon, Takan arrived, answering a summons from the great being. When Kinesh, the local Kahar of Alwain, discovered what had happened, he followed Leodias to the ruin and confronted the being. Kinesh entered the greatest spiritual battle of his life and was found wanting. The being's power washed over him, driving him insane. It allowed him to return to Mikro to weaken the town's resolve. Every night, Kinesh dances naked under the stars and makes prophecies. Sometimes the being's power grips him; other times Alwain sends words of hope through the broken Kahar. Stranger beings also use Kinesh as their oracle. A small group of followers have arisen around him, unsure of what to do, save record his words.

Orsem Honess

Honess is one of the great hestul towers scattered across the Zaharets. It is the western watchpoint of the Luathi lands, and the Sars of Ameena Noani keep it supplied with a full company of guards. Honess is the largest of the forts, due to its proximity to Kroryla and Ameena Noani. The current Nawsi, Rakel of the Omri tribe, has established a friendship with Glykera. They have come to each other's aid on several occasions when Takan or worse have attacked. Sari Phamea is beginning to worry that Ameena Noani is losing its hold on Honess, and she has begun to take steps to ensure their loyalty. As with the other northern orsems, a settlement has sprung up around Honess. Thanks to its trade with Kroryla, caravans that travel to and from Ameena Noani, fertile plains to the west, and mines to the north, Honess is nearly self-sufficient. Rakel believes it could expand to become a city, if the right hand steers its future.

Honess holds two great secrets. First, in the depths beneath its tower, it conceals a secret passage that travels out to the Futhetia Sea. This hestul-constructed tunnel runs for many miles. Along with a dry path for people to walk along, the tunnel has a series of channels that allow rafts and boats swift passage to the sea. Rakel has spent the past couple of years supplying the fort with boats in case the tunnel is ever needed.

Second, Honess' people are angry. They are angry at those who settled Orsem Ven, because the mines that used to supply them now send goods to Ven, which sends its bounty south to Ameena Noani. And they are angry at Sari Phamea for building Ven in the first place. Glykera is fomenting this resentment, unbeknown to Rakel. While Glykera genuinely likes Rakel, claiming an orsem would be a great boon for Kroryla.

Orsem Kitan

The southernmost of the chain of orsems, Kitan sits on a bluff overlooking the Futhetia Sea. The Luathi of Sentem occupy neither it nor its companion, Orsem Val. The forts stand in disuse, lone sentinels of a once-great kingdom. Nawsi Sameel wants to have them re-established, but the ruins of Bartak Kentak are a more pressing matter. However, were some Jackals to turn Kitan into a base of operations, Sameel would find a way to make such an arrangement mutually beneficial.

Kitan holds two great secrets. First, you may find one of the keys to the gates of Ouwa Ejo there. Etched on the walls are an ancient Hulathi rite that can send items to and summon items from the sea. Long ago, the last of the Hulathi wardens of the orsems cast their gate key into the sea using this rite. Should a Hasheer or Kahar seek to invoke this rite, which they can only view under Oura's full light, they could summon a pearl the size of a person's head from the sea. This is one of the three keys necessary to open Ouwa Ejo to the world once again. However, the pearl is an object of lawful power, and it will draw the attention of those sensitive to such things, such as the Daughter Beneath the Earth and Kahar Nabal.

Second, Kitan is one of five orsems that watched the border of Ouwa Ejo. On top of the tower of Kitan are markings that show the directions of the other orsems. One points to Val, two point into the Aeco Woods, and the final one points to the northeast, into the mountains of the A'hule Asa. Should Jackals divine what these marks mean, they might be able to discover more orsems – and the treasures they hold.

Orsem Val

Val is the closer of the two orsems of the Aeco Plains to Sentem. Sameel has had his eye on occupying it for many years. Like the other true orsems of the War Road, Val stands carved from hestul (seastone), which blazes with green fire in the light of the sun. Soon after his first expedition to the orsem, Jepesh came down with his mysterious malady, and the orsem stands unclaimed. From the standpoint of Sentem, the orsem would be a strong frontier fort to prevent Takan raids from the mountains. Additionally, it could serve as a launching point to mine the mountains for much needed metals.

Val holds two great secrets. First, something now occupies it. The rumours of Undead wandering the plains are due to a Mouathenic who is attempting to corrupt Val for its own uses. It has raised the bodies of the former inhabitants, as well as those of the Takan that attempted to oust it from the tower. The Mouathenic searches for a way to free the Daughter Beneath the Earth, and since the Hulathi are the ones who bound her, perhaps Jackals can find the answer in these ruins.

Second, Val is one of five orsems that watched the border of Ouwa Ejo. On top of the tower of Val are markings that show the directions of the other orsems. One points to Kitan, two point into the Aeco Woods, and the final one points to the east, into the mountains of the A'hule Asa. Should Jackals divine what these marks mean, they might be able to discover more orsems and – any treasures they might hold. Additionally, Val holds one of the ancient Hulathi Braziers of Sending, which is bound to the orsems of the area, as well as places deeper in the mountains.

Orsem Ven

Ven is not a true orsem of old. It was raised by Luathi command and crafted by Luathi hands. The small fort is a claim against the Vori Wastes. The mountains of the Vori Vana are rich in ore, something the Sars of Ameena Noani crave. Sari Phamea established the ability for citizens of Ameena Noani to begin digging in the Vori Vana. They set up this trading post, which Phamea turned into a fort. For a share of what they find, the miners enjoy refuge and resupplies within the walls of Ven. Copper, silver, gems, and gold have started to flow south, beginning to pay off the debt the miners owe to Ameena Noani.

Ven holds two great secrets. First, it recently sealed its gates against the miners. Plague struck the miners, a foul consumption that spreads through the body quickly and marks its victims' skulls with a strange symbol. The miners who are not infected are becoming desperate, as food supplies are beginning to run low.

Second, the Vori Vana holds a secret refuge from the last age. Unknown to all in the Zaharets, a Hulathi keep lies hidden in the highest vales of the Vana. The Hulathi have become aware of the miners and Ven, and are undecided about what to do. For nearly a thousand years, they have remained sequestered from the larger world, contemplating their philosophy of Hetia, worshiping Hesoman, and living in quiet isolation. They will not reveal themselves before they are ready. When they do, the Luathi will find themselves as small children before the stature and wisdom of this ancient and noble people.

Orsem Yahan

Yahan stands at the western end of the wastes. It wards the northern and eastern borders of the Ameena Noani region, provides a trademeet for the Trauj, and sends lumber from the Ligna towards Ameena Noani. The Nawsi of Yahan, Namar, seeks to keep Yahan as a firm pillar against the threats from beyond the border of civilisation. To that end, Namar has established a permanent fighting force, which he trains and supplements with Trauj, Jackals, and recruits from Mikro. Yahan is less of a town and more of an armed encampment. Namar runs regular patrols out into the Ligna Hualla, the Rekiti Vana (the mountains to the east), and the plains around the Ouwa Ejo, scouring them for Wolves (bandits), Takan, and other threats. His vigilance has prevented attacks on the fort for 10 years. However, now that the Ligna is hostile to humans, the fort's lumber harvest is becoming smaller each year. Namar is looking for ways to supplement the lumber, as the fort depends on that trade income to maintain its forces.

Yahan holds two great secrets. First, it is responsible for the angering of the forest. Namar's vigilance has forced the Wolves and Takan to take deeper refuge in the forest, which allowed them to discover the Mouadran ruins. If Namar were to find out, his guilt over the people the forest has claimed would be a terrible burden to bear.

Second, Wolves have infiltrated Yahan. The commander of this bandit group – which is hiding in nearby ruins in the Ligna – has sent a dozen of his people into the fort, posing as recruits. The commander seeks to assassinate Namar, take the fort, and establish a small city-state for himself. Backed by the power beneath the ruins and the Takan that worship it, Yahan could fall to Chaos and Corruption, becoming a Wolf's lair that would blight the land.

Ouwa Ejo

The sealed city stands to the north of Sentem. All of the Yesim's attempts to breach its walls and claim the city as their seat have failed. The smooth, tall walls defy attempts to climb them, the hestul is immune to bronze and rites, and the gates resist the strongest ram. The towering gatehouse prevents clear views of the city beyond, although you can make out ruins within. For the Sar who claims this ancient site, Ouwa Ejo will provide an inviolate defence against any might the Luathi can muster.

Ouwa Ejo holds two great secrets. First, Hulathi hands built the city; in fact, it was the seat of the kingdom of Lukka. From here they ruled for centuries, worshiping Hesoman, and standing against the rising tide of the east. None living know what felled the city and laid its buildings and citizens to waste, but whatever power did it could not break the wards of the High Path, which the Hulathi wove into the hestul and silver.

Second, the Hulathi sealed their gates by removing three great gems that once adorned them. One is a large pearl, which an unknown person cast into the sea near Orsem Kitan. The second is a brilliant yellow citrine, which a traveller carried into the south long ago, obeying the words of a great Hulathi prophet in the final days of the city. And the final one is a large carnelian gem, known as the Sardine of Ejo, which lies within the crypts below the Temple to the Morning Lord. Should someone locate all three stones and place them once again within the gates of Ouwa Ejo, the Hulathi city would open to the world.

Rataro

Rataro is the second seat of the Hasheers. The city is built on top of several ruins, and the Hasheers quickly discovered the existence of tablets, scrolls, and other records in the vaults beneath the city. The Hasheers extrapolated many of their rites from these findings. Fertile river plains surround Rataro, which allows it to grow more grain than it can use. It trades with Mikro and Ameena Noani, as well as charging a small tax for each visit to its Hasheers and each viewing of the famed Rataro tablets – taxes Sar Kallias recently raised. Due to its distance from the edges of the wilds, Rataro maintains only a token force to defend the city. The Hasheers believe the old bridge is warded against the Takan, which local legend perpetuates.

Rataro holds two great secrets. First, Rata, the town's original Sar, is still the Sar. In the vaults beneath Rataro, Rata discovered an ancient rite, which allows her to move her spirit into the body of a specially prepared person. Her spirit consumes the other's as it finds root in the new body. Initially, Rata preformed this rite to ensure the Hasheers would not lose her research. She felt one more lifetime would be sufficient to record it all. However, she is now addicted to the idea of an immortal existence, fearful of judgement were she to die, and grows ever more powerful due to the lives she has consumed.

Second, Rataro holds a map to one of the great Hannic mansions. Although no one has yet discovered the true meaning of the tablets found in the oldest ruins of the city, it is only a matter of time before someone, either a Hasheer or someone looking for the Hann, deciphers the text. When that happens, Rataro will scramble to finance a pack of Jackals to seek out the mansion and whatever lies within it.

Sentem

Sentem is the seat of the Yesim family and the southernmost Luathi settlement on the War Road. As such, it sees trade come from Ger and the southern Trauj clans, as well as traders from Ameena Noani on their way to and from the southern lands. The broad and fertile plains of Aeco provide land to grow crops and tend. Trade with Densom provides the lumber Sentem needs to continue its expansion. Sar Jepesh was in the process of consolidating much of the plains under his control before he fell ill, and his son carries on this plan. Both are keeping wary eyes on the north. Although many miles and villages lie between them and Ameena Noani, they know the Sars of the north look towards them with greedy intent.

Sentem holds two great secrets. First is the truth of Jepesh's malady. It is no sickness of the body that claims the Sar, but a malady of the mind. Dark spirits haunt him, reducing the once-great man to a wild beast kept penned in his room. His hair has grown long, his nails are like claws, and he howls away at apparitions only he can see. Sameel refuses to give up on his father, but each day Jepesh slips further away from humanity. Sameel is uncertain whether the father he knew and loved is lost forever.

Second, Sameel's older brother, Hirrom, is not dead, as the world assumes. The Takan raid that seemed to claim his life ended with a Tsutakan carrying the heir apparent away into the Aeco Woods and presenting him to the Daughter Beneath the Earth. Feverish, wounded, and near death, the Daughter Beneath the Earth healed his body and captured his soul. Hirrom now serves the Daughter, preparing to lead the Takan against his ancestral home, unaware of his past.

Temple to the Morning Lord

Nabal uncovered an ancient Hulathi site and understood enough ancient lore to know what he had found. A close friend to the Yesim family, Nabal sees this as a perfect site for a new town, expanding Sentem's dominance of the plains. Additionally, he sees the ancient site as the perfect place to unify worship of Alwain in the south. The excavation is slow going, but already there are signs of relics, rites, and more hidden within the depths of the structure beneath the plains.

The temple holds two great secrets. First, Nabal uncovered a rite he believes could save Jepesh's life. It requires ingredients that have passed into legend: the heart of an ayal (a rare deer once found in the Aeco Woods), an asa rose (a strange stone growth in the mountains), and a piece of hesoa from the Hannic moon path. If Jackals could find these ingredients, then perhaps they could banish the malady of spirit that claims Jepesh.

Second, the temple ruins are remnants of the first place the Hulathi landed when they returned to the Zaharets after Ouwathia Oulermo sunk beneath the waves. As such, it is a site sacred to Alwain/Hesoman, and Kahars who inhabit it will find they can draw on the Devotion invested in this place. While on the temple grounds, Kahars have unlimited Devotion for the purpose of invoking rites. However, after they spend Devotion equal to twice their maximum Devotion, the strain begins to take a toll on their body. Each subsequent rite inflicts 1d8 Wounds, as the amount of spiritual power flowing through their mortal flesh is more than it can bear.

CHAPTER 8

RUNNING THE GAME

The Jackals all lay dying around the feet of the Daughter Beneath the Earth. New tears etched themselves onto her silvered mask as their spirits slipped free of their flesh. Each new tear, added to the hundreds already there, sent a delightful shiver racing over her skin. The Daughter stepped delicately between the growing pools of blood and viscera. Her children were already feasting on the warm flesh of the big Melkoni. His screams faded as she felt a fresh tear trace its way across the mask's cheek. Each tear was a spirit, bound to the mask for her use. Already, the ancient mask whispered with new life. Soon, she would be strong enough to break the Hulathi wards and return to the world above. To answer the call of the east.

The Luathi woman who bore the mark of the sun, coughed up some blood, but seemed to hold fast to life. Intrigued, the Daughter knelt and ran her finger through the blood on the woman's cheek. The caress caused the Luathi's eyes to focus on the silvered visage.

"Suffer not…" a bloody cough stole the rest of her words.

"Suffer not the Mouathenic to live. Bind them beneath the earth and sever them from light and clan. I know how the rites go, dear. I used to profess them myself." The coated finger slipped between carved lips. "But I have found a new rite to follow and a new master to serve. Can you not feel his servants even now, on the cusp of the Silent Lands? They answer to me, here beneath the earth." She shivered, and another tear etched itself as the Ger slipped away.

The Luathi whispered something, her bloody lips moving almost silently in the darkness.

"Only Alwain speaks in the Silent Lands…" Her eyes widened, and a peaceful smile spread over her lips as her spirit slipped away, evading the mask's magic. The Daughter spoke her master's name as a curse and set her children on the dead flesh. Alwain may have been able to save this one, but she would ensure the rest of his children bowed before the ice-wrought throne.

Welcome, Loremaster, to the Land of Risings. This chapter provides tools for you to run a game of *Jackals*, and make the world of Kalypsis and the Zaharets come alive for your players. Players are welcome to read this chapter, but should realize that in doing so, they will strip away some of the mystery of the world.

The Zaharets, and Kalypsis at large, is a Bronze Age fantasy world heavily influenced by Ancient Near East myths and literature. Here, you will find a world ripe for the heroics of such characters as Gilgamesh, Achilles, David, and Dan'el. If you need more inspiration for adventures in the Zaharets, check out the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Baal Cycles*, the *Enuma Elish*, and the Old Testament books of Judges and Samuel.

LOREMASTER ADVICE

Jackals is easy to play and to run. Most situations boil down to a d100 roll. If a situation arises where the Loremaster is unsure how to proceed, or if something comes up that is not covered by the rules, choose a skill that makes sense for the Jackal to use, decide how difficult the task should be, apply the modifier, and let the player roll. Although try to cover the usual and unusual events that can happen in a game, events at individual tables often create situations where a Loremaster might need to improvise.

Creating the feel of the Bronze Age setting of *Jackals* might be difficult, so below we include some advice on how the world works, and explanain of some of the core assumptions of the game.

WHAT DEFINES THE BRONZE AGE?

The obvious answer is that bronze is the main metal of choice for tools. City-states and small kingdoms are also important in the Bronze Age. Towns and villages, although they pay tribute to larger cities for protection, are often isolated. Throughout the Zaharets, this is the norm. Ger is the one exception that proves the rule. The city-states of the Luathi and Melkoni are points of light that press back the Chaos of the world. This was not always the case. In the past, before the collapse of civilisation, there were kingdoms and empires in the world – the civilisations of the Forgotten Peoples. However, in the wake of the collapse, civilisation regressed back to the Bronze Age.

Literacy is another component that deserves special consideration during the Bronze Age. Literacy is not pervasive. Writing is the hands of the scribes and rulers. It is produced on clay tablets, or papyrus in the case of the Gerwa. Writing is a time-consuming process, which is why it is hoarded in specific locations, such as the Scriptorium of Ameena Noani.

The people of this time use pottery and amphora for storage, and clay is one of the major mediums of the day. Linen and leather make up most of the materials for clothing. Light is a precious commodity, provided via smoky fires or dim oil lamps. Immediate family is very important; often, multiple generations live in the same house or area of the community. Most people can trace their lineage back to demi-gods, heroes, or the founders of clans or tribes.

AWARDING ACTIVE ADVANCEMENTS

At the end of an adventure, or season, the Loremaster has the responsibility to hand out active advancements. Each adventure should be worth two to five advancements. Players should receive one advancement for participating in the adventure, and one advancement for completing the adventure alive. Additionally, the Loremaster can hand out one to three additional advancements for exceptional roleplaying, difficult encounters, or anything else they like. It is not necessary in *Jackals* for every character to have the same number of active advancements, so the Loremaster has the flexibility to award a different number of advancements to each player on the basis of their goals and performance in the adventure.

Awarding Ancient Lore

One of the trickier parts of being a Loremaster for *Jackals* is working out when and how to award Ancient Lore. This skill is an important part of understanding the Forgotten Peoples, learning ancient magic and rites, and coming to a deeper understanding of the setting. In general, the Loremaster should award Jackals an Ancient Lore increase when the characters encounter the ancient past of the setting: friezes in ancient temples, lost scrolls of lore, even magic items that bear ancient lore upon them. Typical rewards should be between 3% and 5%. These increases represent tiny glimpses into the past that enable the Jackals to slowly piece together the history of the Zaharets.

Ancient Lore never benefits from passive or active advancements.

CULTURAL TOUCHSTONES

As mentioned before, *Jackals* takes its inspiration from Ancient Near East cultures and myths. A Loremaster can explore these to draw inspiration for *Jackals* adventures, NPCs, campaigns, and magic items. Below are the general cultural analogues for researching the different cultures in *Jackals*:

CULTURAL TOUCHSTONES

Culture	Touchstone
Hann	Minoan Greece
Hulathi	Sea Peoples/Atlantis
Ger	Middle/New Kingdom Egypt
Keta	Hittite Empire
Luathi	Canaan and Israel
Melkoni	Mycenaean Greece
Mouadah	Assyria/Sumer/Babylon
Trauj	Desert/Tribal Nomads of the Arabian Peninsula

Osprey Publishing has great references for these cultures, and they are the subjects of freely available podcasts, websites, and museum collections (viewable online).

LAW VERSUS CHAOS

The prime conflict in *Jackals* is between the powers of Law and those of Chaos. In general, the peoples of the Zaharets see their ancestors, the gods, and Alwain as forces of Law in the world. These forces protect and promote the natural order of the world and foster civilisation. They establish laws that reflect the Laws of the world. They keep things running. When Law is strong, humanity thrives, builds communities, and banishes Takan. Alas, the fight for Law is never over, for Chaos breeds in darkness and ignorance.

Opposing Law are the Rathic, Takan, and other forces of Chaos. Chaos has a face as well, although it has hidden it for the time being, and civilisation normally only glimpses it through its minions. The Empire of Mouadah was once Chaos' great tool in the world, as was Ruined Keta before it. Chaos seeks to pervert, bind, and enslave the natural order. When Chaos is strong, darkness reigns. It enslaves humanity through thoughts or chains, and the world suffers.

Hasheers feel a cycle best represents this battle. Law is ascendant for a time, but humanity fails to guard against the insidious depredations of Chaos, and Chaos ascends. Eventually, humanity rebels and a new Age of Law begins. The cycle of Law and Chaos, of civilisation and barbarism, is well represented throughout history, as well as in fiction. Robert E. Howard's *Conan* stories represent this well, as does *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* by Edward Gibbon. Both provide excellent examples that can aid in planning a *Jackals* campaign.

OLDER IS MORE POTENT

The rule of Kalypsis is that the older something is, the more potent its magic. *Jackals* defines magic as the interaction between the spiritual world and the mortal one. Currently, the cultures of the world are strictly mortal, but as you look into the past, this was not always the case. The Rathic were and are strictly spiritual beings. The Skessh and the Hann were a unique blending of spiritual and mortal essences, leaning far more towards the spiritual. They understood the Laws and nature of both worlds in a way mortal humans cannot. Theirs was the magic of intent, of speaking or singing the effects they wanted into being. The Hasheers and Hekas of this age can only work in metaphors compared to such beings. The Hulathi possessed a connection to Alwain that the Luathi do not understand. Their magic was the intermediary step, a perfect blending of the spiritual and physical, as was that of the Mouadrans. Those who work magic in this age seek to reclaim the knowledge of the Hulathi and the Mouadrans, to emulate the works of the past and comprehend the workings of the natural world.

WHAT JACKALS DO, AND WHAT IF THEY DO NOTHING?

In *Jackals*, characters are not just adventurers, they are Jackals. But what does this mean? Jackals are outcasts from society, those who feel the call of the road, love the thrill of danger, and crave more than towns can offer. They want to be free. They travel to scavenge the bones of the dead societies of the Zaharets and bring back wealth and knowledge. They deal with threats that are too large for a town by working as a pack. They are vital to a town's survival, yet they are outsiders.

However, they also need the towns to survive. Jackals need a place to take seasonal actions, to heal and recover, to sell goods, and to buy artefacts. The tension between being in but not a part of society is the heart of the Jackal's tale. There are three aspects of *Jackals* that strongly emphasize this. The first involves the questions at the end of the character creation section, which help to establish what sent the characters out onto the War Road. They provide insights for the Loremaster to help craft the narrative of the character's time in the Zaharets.

Second, the seasonal action represents the intrinsic ties Jackals form with a community. Humans are creatures of community, and with seasonal actions, the Jackals grow to become tightly knit to the communities in which they work. Finally, Kleos represents a Jackal's personal glory and reputation. People in the community welcome Jackals with greater Kleos. Takan hunt them. As the Loremaster, you can view Kleos (and scars, if you choose to use them) as a timer of sorts. No one remains a Jackal forever. The War Road eventually takes its toll. The temptation to retire and start a new character increases the longer a character continues to adventure.

There are rewards to retiring. Jackals become part of the fabric of the Zaharets, and they can pass on wisdom, knowledge, and gear to the next generation. The game also rewards players when their character retires instead of dying. When they retire a character, their next character comes into the world more powerful.

But what if there were no Jackals? What is the point of their existence in the Zaharets? What if they did nothing but acquire wealth for themselves? Civilisation is a fragile thing in the Zaharets. There are many powers and entities that wish to see the tide of Chaos flow back over the world. Without those who would explore the lands outside the safety of the city, push back the Takan tribes, and bring back knowledge of the past, those chaotic beings could move in obscurity to bring ruin upon the land. Think of Jackals as scouts for a kingdom, or canaries in coal mines. They provide eyes and ears in the dark places of the world. They are the first ones to see a Takan tribe massing, a Mouathenic raising a legion of the dead, or a Priest-King returning from the dead to reclaim her throne. Without Jackals, the knowledge of the past stays buried, the battle for civilisation draws closer to home, and Chaos will eventually bring the Zaharets to the brink of a new collapse.

This desperation should come across during a game of *Jackals*. It is why Clash Points are a core part of the game; they allow the Loremaster to threaten to overwhelm the Jackals with numbers. When you look at the ancient sources, historians often inflated the numbers of enemy armies. Clash Points allow the characters to fight against hordes of foes, and stand a chance against such great numbers.

The rest of this chapter contains the Loremaster's rules, setting information, and advice to help you make the most of the *Jackals* game and setting.

CALENDAR

The Luathi use the ancient calendar of the Sea Peoples to this day, which breaks the year up into 10 months containing 30 days each, with 10 days forming a transitional time between years.

MONTHS

Below are the names of the months in common usage, along with their ancient names.

ZAHARETS MONTHS

Common Name	Ancient Name	Season
Isten	Oulerach	Rainy
Sina	Arekon	Rainy
Salas	Aecorach	Rainy
Erbe	Senon	Dry
Hamis	Adarach	Dry
Sedis	Wainon	Dry
Sebe	Heruson	Dry
Samane	Luarach	Dry
Tise	Mouadrach	Rainy
Eser	Ewurach	Rainy
Zadon's Week	Tasfoseba	Rainy

The transitional week is known as Zadon's Week, and is an inauspicious time.

DAYS OF THE WEEK

In the Zaharets, the calendar breaks down each month into three 10-day 'weeks'. Each day is known as an ud. When referring to a specific ud is necessary, people often use the format 'the 3rd Oura Day (Udoura) of Erbe'. Below are the names of the days by common usage, their ancient name, and their symbolic significance.

ZAHARETS DAYS

Common Name	Ancient Name	Significance
Chief Day	Udsar	Sar's court day
Holy Day	Udada	Holy day
Kauma Day	Udkauma	War/conflict
Gai Day	Udgai	Planting/renewal
Oura Day	Udoura	Scribing/law/knowledge
Bull Day	Udameena	Labour
Dark Day	Udaketa	Keeping secrets
Water Day	Udafuth	Holy day, endings
Path Day	Udetia	Starting a journey
Earth Day	Udaqara	Death, trials, troubles

SEASONS

The Zaharets has only two seasons: the dry season and the rainy season. The rainy season runs from the beginning of Tise to the end of Salas. It is cool (7–22 ºC) and marked by frequent rains. The rainy season equinox falls on the 3rd Udkauma of Samane, with the solstice falling on Zadon's Udaqara.

The dry season runs from the beginning of Erbe to the end of Samane. It is warm (16–30 ºC). The dry season's equinox falls on the 2nd Udafuth of Salas, with the solstice falling on the 1st Udoura of Sedis.

Planting and travel occur during all seasons, which requires labour from much of the community. Communities welcome Jackals to pitch in, if they so desire. This cycle of seasons, planting, and harvesting influences the adventures of Jackals. Most communities can only hire Jackals twice per season. Under most circumstances, after two adventures, it is time for a seasonal action (see page 117). This ebb and flow of adventuring and seasonal changes creates a cycle of time for your adventures and campaigns, grounding them in the world of the Zaharets. By referencing the planting and harvesting, the holy days, and other events, the Loremaster can create a calendar of days that continue to come up, and regular occurrences that Jackals may experience when they return to towns. Below are the major Luathi holy days, but feel free to add your own, as local towns will certainly celebrate others, especially to commemorate spectacular victories by Jackals.

LUATHI HOLY DAYS

Day	Name	Reason
2nd Udsar to 2nd Udaqara of Isten	Heroth	A week-long celebration of the Uprising and the gifting of the Shalapher
2nd Udsar of Salas	Reshpar	Celebration of the rainy-season harvest (grains, barley, wheat, herbs)
2nd Udafuth of Salas	Mekinok	The day of the equinox is the traditional day of preparing the fields for dry-season planting
1st Udoura of Sedis	Udalwan	Summer solstice, the longest day of the year. High holy day set aside to Alwain.
1st Udoura of Sebe	Reshpar	Celebration of the dry-season harvest (grapes, olives, fruits)
3rd Udkauma of Samane	Hatsaa	The day of the equinox is the traditional day of preparing the fields for rainy-season planting

LUNAR CALENDAR

The Lunar calendar of Kalypsis is difficult to represent, for it tracks the three sky daughters: Kauma, Gai, and Oura. Kauma, the red moon, cycles every 18 days. Gai, the green moon, cycles every 38 days. Oura, the silver moon, cycles every 58 days.

The table below contains the lunar cycle of the month of Isten for the first year of the campaign:

LUNAR CALENDAR

Chief Day	Holy Day	Kauma Day	Gai Day	Oura Day	Bull Day	Dark Day	Water Day	Path Day	Earth Day
		Kauma, new moon	Eclipse of Oura					Gai, new moon	
Oura, full moon	Kauma, full moon								
Kauma, new moon							Gai, full moon		Kauma, full moon

DANCERS IN THE HEAVENS

Besides the three daughters, there are many other stars and constellations in the night sky, and all have bearing on the lives of those who live in the Zaharets. There is Mazar, the south star, which glows with a baleful red light. The light of Chium, the north star, guides travellers along the War Road.

Additionally, there is the Skyriver, a violet band of illumination which rises a few hours after dusk and travels the northern sky, before sinking again a few hours before dawn. Below are the common constellations, stars, and astronomical phenomena which Jackals in the Zaharets can see in the night sky.

DANCERS IN THE HEAVENS

Name	Type
Chium	Star
Jackal	Star
Mazar	Star
The Skyriver	Stellar Band
Adalis, The Hunter	Constellation
The Bulls	Constellation (3)
The Gates	Constellation
The Maw	Constellation

DANCERS IN THE HEAVENS

Name	Type
Nyssalis	Constellation
Orsem Asa	Constellation
Tracal	Constellation
The Tree	Constellation
Twin-Headed Serpent	Constellation
The Wheel	Constellation
Throne of Night	Emptiness

FORGOTTEN PEOPLES

The Zaharets were home to more peoples than just the cultures presented in this book. These forgotten cultures left their mark on the Zaharets thousands of years before the current age. Jackals can still find their ruins, rites, and artefacts along the War Road. Later books may provide options to play as these Forgotten Peoples, since those who look deeply into the hidden places of the world might yet find their presence. Fate is not yet done with these peoples, and they may still have a role to play on the stage of the world.

We provide a brief overview of each of the Forgotten Peoples are given here to familiarize the Loremaster with them for their own campaigns, as well as for the *Fall of the Children of Bronze* campaign.

HANN

The myths and legends of the Gerwa and Melkoni reference the Hann by name; they even make appearances in the scriptures of the Luathi. What is known by the wise is that long before humanity saw the sun rise over the Zaharets, the Hann fell from the moons to make their mansions in the depths beneath the mountains. The Hann ruled over all the Zaharets in ages past. The Hasheers have recovered fragments that point to constant wars against foes, physical and otherwise; these conflicts wore down the Hann, and they retreated behind their great gates. No one has seen a Hann in the Zaharets since before the fall of the Kingdom of Ignorance, but the Melkoni speak of Kuanos Thureos, a great Hann city far to the west, beyond the Melkoni homelands.

The legends say the Hann were tall, lithe beings of great beauty and sharp features. Yet theirs was an inhuman beauty, as depicted by the friezes Jackals find in their old outposts. The Hann and the Hulathi alternately warred against each other and allied against Chaos, until the Hulathi supplanted the Hann as the rulers of the Land of Risings.

HULATHI

The Hulathi, or 'men of silver' in their own tongue, have vanished from the Zaharets. The Melkoni and Luathi remember little of the Hulathi – even their name has been lost to all but the highest ranking Hasheers. The Melkoni speak of a great force that came from the sea, fleeing some disaster and bringing with them the secrets of orichalcum, hestul (seastone), and Alwain. Their legacy lives on in the hestul ruins that dot the landscape of the coastal region, the Vori Wastes, and the Luasa Desert. These ruins glow with green flame in the light of the sun and always smell of the sea, no matter how far inland they might be. The Gerwa remember the Sea People differently, for Ger warred continuously with the Grand Kingdoms before they fell.

The Grand Kingdoms are the Hasheers' name for the Hulathi kingdoms of Sardon, Lukka, and Kelesh across the mountains, which presided over much of the Zaharets more than a thousand years ago. They fell in the final days of the Span of Light and Dark, in a war between the west and the east which the poet Boaz captured in epic verse. The darkness of the age stole away much of this verse, but the Hasheers still pay well for fragments of the poem in an attempt to recreate this magnificent work.

MOUADRANS

Those who know the ancient lore speak the name Mouadah in hushed tones. The Shalapher says that when the tribes of humanity first came to the Zaharets, one chose to dwell in the east – which Alwain forbade – because the land was pleasing to their eyes. From this tribe arose the Kingdom of Mouadah. The Skessh and Rathic of ruined Keta taught them dark magics, and the Mouadrans grew powerful. They raised the Iron Gates and tended the Ironbound Tree. It was the Mouadah who tamed the Takan and bred them in greater and more terrible numbers. It was the Mouadah that brought low the great kingdom of Kelesh, east of the mountains, and drove the Hann of Suranu Teka to extinction with the Still Plague. It was only through an alliance of Hann, Hulathi, and Luathi that the eastern kingdom was overthrown, and the Iron Gate cast down. However, the Priest-Kings took revenge from beyond the grave; as the remaining Grand Kingdoms fell, the armies of the Takan enslaved the Luathi, and the world plunged into a dark age.

The wise say Mouadah is not destroyed, but the greatest Priest-Kings lie in torpor, awaiting a time when the stars are right and their great master in the north summons their spirits again from the Silent Lands.

THE SKESSH

Ruined Keta was the province of the Skessh, a race of ophidians that inhabited the world from the dawn of time. It was they who first went to war with the Rathic and the Hann, when the latter descended to Kalypsis. It was they who first stood against – and then worshipped – the great power of the North, and created the techniques of the Mouathenic tradition. They enslaved humanity in the earliest days of their existence, breeding the Takan from them. When the clans first arrived, those that became the Mouadrans stole the lore from the Skessh and raised their own altars to their ophidian gods.

The Hasheers say that the wars with the Hann and Gerwa destroyed the Skessh and ruined Keta. However, like many of the Forgotten Peoples, the world is not yet done with the Skessh, and a remnant survives in the northern reaches of the world.

TOWNS ALONG THE WAR ROAD

For the *Jackals* core rules, the gazetteer focuses in on the northern and southern regions of the Zaharets. This provides a narrow view of the main Luathi seats of power, but there are miles of land along the War Road, and they are not empty. Villages and towns dot the coast, claim defensible tors, and shelter in the shade of forests. They are generally unaligned with Sentem or Ameena Noani. We leave this stretch of the map empty for Loremasters to populate with their own towns and villages. See *The Bronze Bell* adventure for an example of such a village. Are there other towns in the Zaharets beyond Sentem and Ameena Noani? Definitely. Future supplements may explore such settlements.

Most cultures along the War Road build towns around an old ruin, many times from the cultures covered in the previous section. The Loremaster can roll 1d100 on the following table to determine the age and nature of the ruin, which can help with generating the town and designing any ruins along the road leading towards the town.

WHO BUILT THE RUIN?		
1d100	Culture	Age
1–10	Keta (Skesshic)	1d6 × 1000 years old
11–20	Hann	1d4 × 1000 years old
21–30	Ancient Ger	2d6 × 100 years old
31–50	Takan	1d6 × 100 years old
51–65	Luathi	1d4 × 100 years old
66–80	Ger	1d6 × 100 years old
81–90	Mouadah	(1d6 + 5) × 100 years old
91–100	Hulathi	(1d6 + 5) × 100 years old

CORRUPTION

Chaos comes in many forms in *Jackals*, but all of them oppose the Law of the world and civilisation. Dark spirits and foul abominations wait in the dark places of the world, seeking out the weak-souled. Every action that weakens the rule of Law stains the soul. Below is a sampling of such actions; when a character takes one of these actions, they incur Corruption.

CORRUPTIVE ACTIONS	
Action	Corruption Gained
Abandoning allies/cowardice	2 points
Allying with a chaotic being	2 points per season for allying with a character with 10+ Corruption. +1 point per 5 full points of Corruption over 10 that character possesses (this includes PCs).
Banditry	1 point per raid + 1 point per 100 ss worth of goods stolen
Bribing an official	1 point per 100 ss of the bribe
Blood magic	1 point per 5 DP (add another point per 5 DP if stolen from another)
Communion with chaotic beings	3 points per rite
Destabilisation of the rule of Law	3 points
Learning a rite of the Twisted Path	1 point per rite
Murder of a lawful being	3 points per death
Possession of mouahalan coins	1 point per season per 10 coins
Telling a falsehood to a lawful being	1 point per falsehood
Theft from lawful sources	1 point per 100 ss stolen
Travelling in a corrupted area	1 point per week (mitigated by a Willpower or Endurance check)
Possession of corrupted artefacts	1 point per season, 1 point per use
Using a rite of the Twisted Path	1 point per rite
Violating cultural taboos	1 point per act
Violence against a lawful being	2 points per act

Additionally, travelling through chaotic lands can infect a traveller, and some creatures inflict Corruption upon those who encounter them.

THE POWER OF CORRUPTION

Chaos is seductive, and the deeper the Corruption goes, the more power it places in the hands of a character. As a character's Corruption score increases, they gain Dark Fate Points. These Dark Fate Points represent the attention given to the character by the dark powers of the world. Dark Fate Points replenish at the same rate as regular Fate Points. Additionally, a character recovers ALL Dark Fate Points whenever they gain additional Corruption.

Jackals and NPCs can spend Dark Fate Points after casting a dark rite to negate the Devotion cost. Due to the timing of this spend, the character does not get to refresh their Dark Fate Points with the Corruption gained from casting the dark rite.

CORRUPTION POINTS	
Corruption Points	Effect
At 5 points	Gain 1 Dark Fate Point
At 10 points	Replace one Fate Point with one Dark Fate Point
At 15 points	Gain 1 Dark Fate Point
At 20 points	Replace two Fate Points with one Dark Fate Point

MARKS OF CORRUPTION

As a character accumulates Corruption, Chaos begins to twist them. They soon begin to bear its marks on their flesh and in their mind.

Before these marks appear, it is impossible for Jackals – without the use of the advanced talent 'Identify Corruption' – to detect Corruption in living beings. The subtlety with which Corruption hides within the mortal soul makes it nearly impossible to detect.

The Corruption Effects table shows how chaotic marks affect the character:

CORRUPTION EFFECTS

Points	Name	Effect
6	Corruption of the Mind	Gain one trait from the Corruption of the mind list
7	Mouathenic Rite	Intuit one Mouathenic rite at (Devotion + Wisdom). If a non-ritualist, gain Devotion equal to your corruption.
8		
9	Corruption of Flesh	Gain one trait from the Corruption of flesh list
10	Loss of Connection (Kahar)	Kahar lose their connection to the rites of their tradition
11	Loss of Connection (Alkitar)	Alkitar lose their connection to the rites of their tradition
12	Corruption of the Mind	Gain one trait from the Corruption of the mind list
13	Mouathenic Rite	Intuit one Mouathenic rite
14	Loss of Connection (Yahtahmi)	Yahtahmi lose their connection to the rites of their tradition
15	Corruption of the Mind	Gain one trait from the Corruption of the mind list
16	Corruption of Flesh	Gain one trait from the Corruption of flesh list
17	Mouathenic Rite	Intuit one Mouathenic rite
18		
19	Mouathenic Rite	Intuit one Mouathenic rite
20	Corruption of Flesh	Gain one trait from the Corruption of flesh list
21	You are Mine, Body and Soul	Character is damned and becomes an NPC

Corruption of the Mind and Flesh

Corruption is not just a spiritual affliction. As a character accumulates Corruption, what exists within is expressed without, on their flesh. The twisting of the spirit eventually results in the twisting of the flesh and the mind.

Every time a character gains Corruption of the mind or Corruption of flesh, roll on the appropriate table (re-roll if a character rolls the same result twice):

CORRUPTION OF THE MIND		
1d100	Negative Trait	Effect
1–10	Sees Shadows Everywhere	Paranoia rules the mind of the character. Applies to Deception, Influence, and Trade checks.
11–20	It Will Be Mine	Roll a d4. The character develops an unhealthy obsession with: 1, a person; 2, a place; 3, an idea; 4, an item. It is always the first thing the character reaches for in stressful times. They will do nearly anything to get it back. Applies to all actions related to the obsession or immediate recovery or possession of the object of the obsession.
21–30	Whispers Plague the Weary Mind	The character constantly hears spirits and the dead around them. Applies to Perception (Hearing), Lore, and Ancient Lore checks. Should the character critically fail due to this trait, they must make a Willpower check (with the negative trait applied) to recover Wounds and Devotion Points from a night's sleep. On a failure, they recover half the normal rate; on a fumble, they regain nothing.
31–40	The Heart of a Beast	Fits of rage grip the character. Applies to Influence and Willpower checks.
41–50	Like a Beast Covered in Dew	The character is prone to fits of madness that drive them about like a beast in the field. Applies to Endurance and Survival checks.
51–60	An Untethered Soul	Strange and terrible visions plague the character, robbing them of hope. Should the character critically fail due to this trait, they must make a Willpower check (with the negative trait applied) to recover Wounds and Devotion Points from a night's sleep. On a failure, they recover half the normal rate; on a fumble, they regain nothing.
61–70	Cast Out of the Light	The character suffers from hysterical blindness. Applies to Perception checks.
71–80	An Icy Outlook	The character lacks empathy and the ability to connect with those around them. Applies to Influence and Trade checks.
81–90	An Unlocked Mind	Formless spirits easily possess the character. Applies to Willpower checks.
91–100	A Troubling Spirit	A Rathic comes to vex the character. Applies to Willpower checks.

CORRUPTION OF FLESH

1d100	Corruption	Effect
1–10	Unnatural Strength	The character gains 1d6+1 points of Strength. Physically, their muscles grow and shift like snakes beneath their skin. They also grow a cubit in height and gain 2d10 pounds.
11–20	Fleshly Buboes	The Corruption expresses itself as pus-filled blisters. Reduce the character's Vitality by 1d4.
21–30	Eyes of the Serpent	The character's eyes take on an amber hue like the Skessh. They gain the Inured to Darkness creature special ability (see page 196).
31–40	Brittle Bones	The character's bones begin to turn to chalk. Reduce their Mettle by 1d8.
41–50	Resilience of the Grave	The character's skin becomes sallow. They also give off the foul odour of decay. Increase their Mettle and Protection by 3.
51–60	Corpulence	Over the next 1d4 weeks, the character increases in weight by 300%. They gain +2 Wounds per row and reduce their Move by half.
61–70	Fits	When the character rolls a fumble, seizures incapacitate them for 1d4 rounds.
71–80	Flesh to Salt	The character slowly begins to transform into salt. Increase all damage taken by 3. Additionally, they continually leave salt trails as their skin flakes off.
81–90	Chill of the North	The character's body is inhumanly cold. Their touch causes 1d4 points of damage. Additionally, they are immune to cold damage. Fire damage now bypasses their Valour and causes Wounds.
91–100	White Mark	The character's extremities begin to rot and fall off. Permanently fill in their first row of Wounds. Additionally, every month, roll 1d6. On a 1–2, nothing happens; on a 3–4, the character loses a toe; on 4–6, the character loses a finger. Once all the fingers or toes are gone on one hand or foot, the next roll causes the character to lose the hand or foot.

Corruption of the mind works like a negative trait (see page 158). If the character fails the roll due to this trait, their mental Corruption overpowers them for a time (usually for the duration of the roll or the remainder of the scene), during time the Loremaster gains control of their character, guiding them down the path of their Corruption. In these moments, the Loremaster should work with the player to express the character's Corruption trait. Collaboration between the player and the Loremaster is highly encouraged. However, the Loremaster has the final say in how the trait expresses itself. This is because, for that moment, the player is not in control of the Jackal's actions – Corruption is. Loremasters should apply the trait in a narratively interesting and corruptive or debilitating way. This is not, however, a moment to 'screw over' the player. This is the darker forces of the world expressing their agenda through the character.

Corruption of flesh is a physical change in the Jackal that permanently affects their attributes, as well as marking them as touched by the forces of Choas for others to see. Characters can suppress one physical expression of the Corruption of flesh for a day by spending a Dark Fate Point.

LOSS OF CONNECTION

As Corruption sets in, it can sever a character's link to the powers that grant them their rites. This occurs at various levels for different traditions. For example, Alwain is the least tolerant of Corruption among his followers. Should the character manage to reduce their level of Corruption below the loss-of-connection level, their supernatural patron does not immediately grant them their power back. They must undertake a quest or trial to prove themselves worthy once again. Few patrons grant their worshippers a second chance; none grant a third.

ATONEMENT

Praise Alwain, there is a balm for the corrupted soul. Each culture possesses certain rites that cleanse members of their culture from Corruption. To access these rites, a character must travel to the appropriate location during a seasonal action between adventures (see page 177) and take the Atonement action. They must then make a Culture (Own) check. Success removes the Corruption Points listed in the ritual, while a critical removes an additional 1d4 Corruption. Should a character fail this test, nothing changes.

Characters may not take the same Atonement action two seasons in a row.

Although a character can atone for their acts, there are still consequences. Negative mental traits remain for 2d6 months after a character drops below the level of Corruption which inflicted the trait. If the character ever gains Corruption again, the mental traits unfold in the same way as before and become permanent. Once the seeds of Chaos take root, they will often bloom again.

Physical traits endure for much longer, remaining for 3d6+6 months. After that, the character's body returns to normal; however, the body always wears the scars of the afflictions. Again, if the character gains the Corruption back, the physical transformations become permanent.

Finally, characters never lose the Dark Fate Points they receive. The temptation to tread the old paths of Corruption never goes away. Once a Jackal attracts the eyes of those who seek to usurp the reign of the Zaharets, never does their attention waver from the character.

LUATHI ATONEMENT RITUALS

Ritual Name	Atonement	Effect
Prayers at sunrise	2 hours of praying and the burning of 50 ss worth of ritual material	–1 point of Corruption
Ritual cleansing	Travelling to a temple of Alwain, and spending up to 4 days fasting and praying, which costs 100 ss per day	–2 points of Corruption per day (to a maximum of –8)
Vow to Alwain – action	Making a vow of action (subject to Loremaster approval)	–2 points of Corruption upon completion of the vow
Vow to Alwain – abstention	Making a vow of abstention for one year (subject to Loremaster approval)	–1 point of Corruption per month of abstaining. If the character fails to abstain for the duration of the year, all lost Corruption returns, plus gain an additional 3 Corruption for breaking the vow.
Donation to the temple	Donating goods or coins to a temple	–1 point of Corruption per 150 ss worth donated (to a maximum of –3)

GERWA ATONEMENT RITUALS

Ritual Name	Atonement	Effect
Washing in the sacred pools	Bathing in the sacred pools in Ger. Servants of the Eight control access to these pools, so a petition to the temple must be made.	–1 point of Corruption
The instruments of the Hekas	Purchasing the cleansing unguents of the Hekas to drive the Chaos from their body and spirit. It is a painful and expensive process, which costs 150 ss per dose.	–1 point of Corruption per dose (up to a maximum of –3).
Sacrifice of blood	Letting their own blood as an offering to the Six and the Eight, losing Mettle for the entire next season	–1 point of Corruption per 3 Mettle lost
Donation to the temple	Donating goods or coins to a temple	–1 point of Corruption per 150 ss worth donated (to a maximum of –3)

MELKONI ATONEMENT RITUALS

Ritual Name	Atonement	Effect
Emulate the Peace of Lykos	Negotiating a peaceful resolution to a conflict involving at least five people	–3 points of Corruption
Endure the Trials of Lykos	Travelling to Kroryla and enduring the Seven Trials of Lykos	–7 points of Corruption
Araton's temperance	Making a vow of abstention for one year (subject to Loremaster approval)	–1 point of Corruption per month of abstaining. If the character fails to abstain for the duration of the year, all lost Corruption returns, plus gain an additional 3 Corruption for breaking the vow.
Donation to the temple	Donating goods or coins to a temple	–1 point of Corruption per 150 ss worth donated (to a maximum of –3)

TRAUJ ATONEMENT RITUALS

Ritual Name	Atonement	Effect
Scouring	Spending a day in the Luasa with no food or water	–1 point of Corruption
Telling of the old tales	Composing a new version of one of the tribal tales and presenting it to their clan	–2 points of Corruption
Spit in the eye of the serpent	Seeking out one of the deep tribes of the Takan, far to the east, journeying for at least three weeks	–5 points of Corruption upon slaying the tribe's chieftan
Scarring	Having their clan's Yahtahmi bind some of their Corruption within a tattoo	–1 point of Corruption per 200 ss spent on the tattoo (to a maximum of –5)

NEGATIVE TRAITS

Often, over the course of a game of *Jackals*, a character gains a negative trait. These work in the same way as positive traits, in that they add an extra 1s die to a roll under a specific circumstance. Loremasters should assign each negative trait to a specific skill and application of that skill. The worse the trait, the broader the effect it has. However, instead of allowing the player to take the better 1s result, the Loremaster chooses the worst one. Worst here is a relative term, but in general, Loremasters can invoke negative traits to:

- Cause the character to fail a roll due to a higher 1s result
- Cause the character to fumble a roll due to a matching 1s result that fails
- Cause the character to roll a success rather than a critical due to not matching a 1s result
- Cause the character to lose an opposed roll due to a lower 1s result.

Use of a negative trait negates the use of a positive trait, but not a virtue.

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Light is a powerful resource in Kalypsis. With only smoky oil lamps, dangerous and fickle torches, and powerful magical rites, darkness is the constant companion of a Jackal. Darkness carries with it a steep penalty: the requirement to use Clash Points on your turn to take an action. This represents a Jackal's inability to see, and therefore react. More attention is spent on actively trying to find their target. In situations where darkness is a factor, use the following table to adjust how it affects the characters:

LIGHT AND DARKNESS

Area is...	Example	Effects
Brightly lit	Noon on a clear day	Nothing
Lit	Overcast day, night when the Skyroad and two moons are out, three or more torches, braziers, or large lamps	Nothing
Partially obscured	One moon and stars, two torches, candlelight	+1 Clash Point to all actions, Stealth checks are simple
Dark	Campfire, starlight, single torch	+2 Clash Points to all actions, Stealth checks are easy
Total darkness/blindness	No source of light	+3 Clash Point cost to all actions, Stealth checks are easy

DAMAGE FROM NON-COMBAT SOURCES

In a game of *Jackals*, there may be times when the environment can and should damage a character. Acid, falling, fire, traps, and drowning all fall into this category. These sources inflict damage to either the Jackal's Wounds (because it hurts them) or Mettle (because it exhausts them). In such situations, assign one of the three Defensive skills the Jackal should roll, and refer to the table below. A fumble inflicts full Wound damage or double Mettle damage. Determine the intensity of the environmental effect and modify the check by the difficulty below. All environmental damage ignores Protection and Valour. In most cases, a successful check should result in half damage.

DAMAGE FROM NON-COMBAT SOURCES

Intensity	Wounds	Mettle
Simple	1d6	1
Normal	1d8	1
Difficult	1d12	2
Hard	2d8	2
Extreme	2d12	3

POISON AND DISEASE

The Zaharets is home to many poisons and diseases that can afflict Jackals as they travel the War Road. Although the effects might be different, mechanically they work the same way. Each poison or disease consists of three mechanical effects: vector, onset, and intensity. The vector is how the poison or disease gets introduced into the system. There are four main vectors: inhaled, ingested, contact, or blood. When a Jackal encounters the poison or disease via the vector, they are exposed.

Once exposed, all poisons and diseases have a cycle. This is the time between exposure and when the poison or disease takes effect. During that time, the Jackal might have no clue anything is wrong.

Once the first cycle has passed, the Jackal must make an Endurance check modified by the intensity of the poison or disease. Most poisons or diseases always affect a Jackal, with a successful Endurance check halving its effect and duration. After each check and effect, the disease or poison's cycle begins anew, modified by the Endurance check.

Vectors

- Blood: the Jackal is exposed when the disease or poison enters their bloodstream.
- Contact: the Jackal is exposed when their skin encounters the disease or poison.
- Inhaled: the Jackal is exposed when they breathe in the disease or poison.
- Ingested: the Jackal is exposed when they consume the disease or poison.

Cycles

- Instant: the Jackal must make their Endurance check at the start of the next round.
- Immediately: the onset for this disease or poison is 1d6 combat rounds.
- Soon: the onset for this disease or poison is 1d6 minutes.
- Quick: the onset for this disease or poison is 1d6 hours.
- Slow: the onset for this disease or poison is 1d6 days.

POISON INTENSITY

Intensity Level	Check Difficulty	Physical Damage	Attribute Damage
1	Easy	1d6	1
2	Simple	1d8	1d4
3	Simple	2d4	1d6
4	Normal	1d10	1d8
5	Normal	1d12	2d4
6	Difficult	2d6	1d10
7	Difficult	2d8	1d12
8	Hard	4d4	2d6
9	Hard	3d6	2d8
10	Extreme	2d10	2d10

Diseases or poisons can inflict either physical damage (to Wounds) or attribute damage. A poison or disease can target any attribute, from Mettle to Strength to Devotion. Generally, the Loremaster should select one type of damage over the other for each poison or disease.

Endurance Check Results

In most cases, the results of the Jackal's Endurance check do not prevent the effects of diseases or poisons. A successful Endurance check does reduce the damage a Jackal takes from the current cycle, and might reduce the intensity for the next cycle.

POISON AND DISEASE ENDURANCE CHECK RESULTS

Endurance Check Result	Damage	Intensity Adjustment
Critical	The Jackal takes no damage from the current cycle	Reduce the intensity by 1d6
Success	The Jackal takes half damage	Reduce the intensity by 1d4
Failure	The Jackal takes full damage	Increase the intensity by 1d4
Fumble	The Jackal takes full damage	Increase the intensity by 1d6

SAMPLE POISON: FIERY POISON

Vector: ingested
Cycle: quick
Intensity: 5
Damage type: physical

This Gerwa poison is crafted from arsenic and natron, which is distilled into a fine white powder. If one adds this mixture into wine or water, it dissolves almost instantly

SAMPLE DISEASE: WHITE MARK PLAGUE

Vector: contact
Cycle: slow
Intensity: 7
Damage type: Vitality

White Mark Plague strikes its victims with a debilitating consumption that slowly causes their extremities to rot and fall off, as well as striking them blind. The distinctive white blotches that appear on the victim's skin give this disease its name.

ENCOUNTER TABLES

The various regions of the Zaharets are host to a variety of different beasts, Takan, and creatures. When generating an encounter, the Loremaster can use the tables below for the Plains of Aeco and the Northern War Road. These also provide examples for Loremasters to create their own tables for other areas of the campaign. When rolling on the tables, use 1d8 + 1d12. These encounters assume a party of four Jackals. Increase the numbers for each encounter by 1d4 (2) for every two characters or fraction thereof above four. A Loremaster can either roll the dice to determine how many creatures are in the encounter, or use the number in parentheses.

NORTHERN WAR ROAD ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d8+1d12	Encounter	Enemies
2	Mated pair of Nyssalis	2 Nyssalis
3	Desecrated Ground Etemma	3d4 (8) Etemma
4	Takan Runner Pack	1d6 (3) Tsutakan
5	Bed of Scorpions	3d4 (8) scorpions
6	Nyssalis	1 Nyssalis
7	Wolf Camp	4d6 (14) Wolves (bandits)
8	Wandering Takan Pack	1 Oritakan 1d6 (3) Mavakan 2d6 (7) Norakan
9	Nehushta	1d4 (2) Nehushta
10	Takan War Band	1d4 (2) Oritakan 2d6 (7) Norakan
11	Wolf Pack	3d6 (11) wolves (animals)
12	Wolf Pack	2d6 (7) Wolves (bandits)
13	Takan Hunting Party	1d4 (2) Atakan 1d4 (2) Retakan
14	Skulk of Jackals	3d6 (11) jackals (animals)
15	Warrens of the Norakan	5d6 (20) Norakan
16	Ancient Tomb	1 Rephaim 2d4 (5) Etemma
17	Ankabar	3d4 (8) Ankabar
18	Ancient Battlefield	3d6 (11) Rapiuma
19	Pair of Anzaim	2 Anzaim
20	Defiled Burial Plot	1 Aluqa 1d4 (2) Etemma 2d6 (7) Rapiuma

PLAINS OF AECO ENCOUNTER TABLE

1d8+1d12	Encounter	Enemies
2	Mouathenic and Retinue	1 Mouathenic 1 Atakan 2d6 (7) Mavakan
3	Nahunum War Party	1d6 (4) Nahunum 1d6 (4) lions
4	Bartak Kentak Hunters	1d4 (2) Tsutakan 1d4 (2) Retakan
5	Council of Ukuku	2d8 (9) Ukuku
6	Ankabar	3d4 (8) Ankabar
7	Wild Aburrisanu	2d6 (7) Aburrisanu
8	Raid out of Bartak Kentak	1d4 (2) Oritakan 1d4 (2) Retakan 1 Gadakan
9	The Dead of the Plains	3d6 (11) Rapiuma
10	Skulk of Jackals	3d6 (11) jackals (animals)
11	Wolf Pack	3d6 (11) wolves (animals)
12	Wolf Pack	2d6 (7) Wolves (bandits)
13	Pride of Lions	2d6 (7) lions
14	Scouts of Bartak Kentak	1d4 (2) Oritakan 3d6 (11) Norakan
15	Haunted Battlefield	3d6 (11) Etemma
16	Sortie out of Bartak Kentak	1d4 (2) Oritakan 1d6 (4) Mavakan 2d6 (7) Norakan
17	Nahunum Scouts	1d10 (6) Nahunum
18	Horde of the Dead	5d6 (18) Rapiuma
19	Twisted Hekas and Servants	1 Mouathenic 1d6 (4) Ba
20	Beast of the Sea!	1 Yammim

EQUIPMENT MODIFICATIONS BY CULTURE

Not all weapons and armours are uniform among the cultures. Some cultures are better at producing specific weapons and armours, due to techniques or focuses that other cultures do not possess. When encountering a redsmith for the first time, the Loremaster should roll on the tables below to determine the quality of any specialty items the NPC produces.

These rolls affect all items of these types produced by this redsmith for the rest of the campaign, and the Loremaster should take note of them.

Specialty items cost an additional 100% of the base value cost, per positive trait. The redsmith can produce a speciality item without one or all of its positive trait, for a reduced cost.

Negative traits do not reduce the cost the of the speciality item, unless the Jackal makes a successful Trade roll to identify the quality. The redsmith will not sell a version of such an item without the negative trait.

PROCEDURE

First, roll on the table below to determine your Specialty Item's category and number of traits.

SPECIALITY ITEMS		
1d8	Specialty Item Category	Number of Traits
1	1 weapon	1 trait
2	1 weapon	2 traits
3	1 armour	1 trait
4	1 armour	2 traits
5	2 weapons	1 trait each
6	2 weapons	2 traits each
7	1 weapon and 1 armour	1 trait each
8	1 weapon and 1 armour	2 traits each

Next, for each weapon and armour, roll a d4: on a 1–2, determine its type by rolling on the random item table and selecting the appropriate result; on a 3–4, the Loremaster chooses an appropriate item from the cultural specialties table.

CULTURAL SPECIALTIES		
Culture	Weapons	Armour
Luathi	Daggers, spears, slings, staff slings	Heavy clothing
Gerwa	Daggers, self-bows, maces, khopesh	None
Melkoni	Daggers, spears, swords	Shields, breastplates
Trauj	Horse bows, scimitars, spears	Leather armour

RANDOM ITEMS		
1d12 + 1d10	Weapon	Armour
2	Club	Melkoni shield
3	Blow gun	Melkoni shield
4	Dagger	Melkoni shield
5	Dart	Shield
6	Gerwa axe (2H)	Shield
7	Gerwa bow	Shield
8	Hand sling	Heavy clothes
9	Hatchet	Heavy clothes
10	Horse bow	Heavy clothes
11	Javelin	Leather armour
12	Khopesh/scimitar	Leather armour
13	Long spear	Leather armour
14	Maul (2H)	Scale armour
15	Pick	Scale armour
16	Self-bow	Scale armour
17	Short sword	Breastplate
18	Spear	Breastplate
19	Staff	Breastplate
20	Staff sling	Mirror armour
21	Sword	Mirror armour
22	War axe	Mirror armour

For each speciality item, roll 1d100 per trait to determine the quality on the table below. If the item is a cultural specialty, add +25% to the roll.

TRAIT QUALITY			
1d100	Quality	Damage/ Protection Modifier	Skill Modifier
1–10%	Poor	–2	–10%
11–25%	Sub-par	–1	–5%
26–75%	Normal	0	0
76–90%	Excellent	+1	+5%
91–100%	Master	+2	+10%

Each trait of normal quality has no effect on the properties of the item. If an item only has normal quality traits, it is not considered a speciality item.

For each remaining trait, roll a d4 per trait: on a 1–2, that trait is a modifier to damage (for weapons) or Protection (for armour). Check the trait quality table above for the scope of the modifier. On a 3–4, the trait is skill modifier. The scope of the modifier is determined by the trait quality table – roll on the appropriate table below to determine the skill affected.

WEAPON SKILL TRAITS

1d6	Trait Bonus/Penalty
1–3	Melee Combat (for melee weapons) Ranged Combat (for ranged weapons)
4	Influence
5	Willpower
6	–2/–1/+1/+2 Clash Points

ARMOUR SKILL TRAITS

1d8	Trait Bonus/Penalty
1	Athletics
2	Dodge
3	Endurance
4	Influence
5	Ride
6	Stealth
7	Survival
8	Unarmed Combat

EXAMPLE OF EQUIPMENT MODIFICATION BY CULTURE

The players encounter a Trauj redsmith, so the Loremaster rolls to see whether she produces any specality items. They roll a 4 on the specialty item table, so the redsmith produces one piece of armour with (potentially) two traits. The Loremaster then rolls 1d4 for the item, and scores another 4, so they get to choose a cultural speciality. For Trauj armour, that would be leather armour.

Now, the Loremaster rolls twice for the quality of the traits, adding +25% because it is a cultural speciality. After applying the bonus, the rolls are 80% and 96%, so the armour has one excellent trait and one masterful trait. The Loremaster rolls 1d4 for each to determine the type of trait.

The excellent trait is a Protection modifier, so the armour provides +1 Protection. The masterful trait is a skill modifier, so the Loremaster rolls on the armour skill traits table. The result is a 2, so the armour provides +10% Dodge.

Players can now have the redsmith produce normal leather armour for 100 ss, leather armour with either +1 Protection or +10% Dodge for 200 ss, or leather armour with both +1 Protection and +10% Dodge for 300 ss.

MAGIC ITEMS AND TREASURE

Normally the needs of the story dictate what treasure and magical items a creature possesses, but if a quick roll is necessary, Loremasters should consult the following guidelines.

Each creature has a 'Treasure Score', which is a rating of how much treasure the creature is likely to be carrying. For creatures that form groups: increase the Treasure Score by one for groups of up to 20 creatures, by two for larger groups of up to a hundred creatures, and by three for groups of over a hundred. In this case, the creatures hold treasure in a defended and guarded location, to which the leader of the creatures has access.

Magic items usually involve magic of the type used by the creature. In cases where the creature does not use magic, the item in its hoard is there due to its value and beauty. When the table indicates 'Common Skill%', this refers to the highest Common Skill value among the monsters in the encounter.

TREASURE FOUND

Treasure Score	Treasure Found
0	No treasure whatsoever
1	A couple of coppers, loose change (1d6 cs). Very remote (5%) chance of a minor magical item – the creature either accidentally uses it or remains completely oblivious to it.
2	5d20 in ss
3	5d100 in ss. If the creature uses magic, there is a Common Skill% chance of 1d4 appropriate weapons or armours with one trait.
4	10d100 ss. Common Skill% of appropriate weapons or armours with one trait, and a Common Skill% chance of one magic item regardless of whether the creature uses magic.
5	The wealth of a minor lord. For example: Grave goods of a dead noble worth about 1d6 thousand ss, 1d6 appropriate weapons or armours with one trait, and a Common Skill% chance of 1d4 magic items.
6	The wealth of kings. For example: A dragon's hoard almost beyond comprehension, with 1d10 thousand ss, 2d6 appropriate weapons or armours with two or more traits, 1d8 magic items, and one relic.

WHAT SHAPE IS THE SILVER?

As a shekel is a unit of weight, not coinage, there are a variety of ways to present the treasure Jackals find along the road. Roll on the table below to see what form silver treasure might take in the Zaharets. If the treasure value seems too high for the item in question, embellish it with gold and gems to increase its worth.

SHAPE OF THE SILVER

1d8	Item
1	Rings
2	Talents – bars
3	Necklace
4	Crown

SHAPE OF THE SILVER

1d8	Item
5	Figurine
6	Amulets
7	Armband
8	Raw ore

MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items are a staple of fantasy worlds, and Kalypsis is no different. The cultures of the Zaharets are able to create items through crafting (see the Craft and Imbue Rite talents) or through rites (specifically the Hekas). Additionally, the Forgotten Peoples crafted magic items long ago using methods and rites unknown to the cultures of the Zaharets. This is the expression of one of the foundational principles of the game: older is more potent. There is one exception to this rule. Using an item in great feats of heroism, in defence of Law, in the expansion of Chaos, or in the service of one's god or goddess can awaken an item to greatness.

Below are the rules for creating magical items and awakening items to greatness, as well as examples of common and rare magic items in the Zaharets.

Creating Magical Items

These rules are for Loremasters to create magical items. Jackals should use Craft talents, seasonal actions, and rites to do so. When creating a magical item, there are four things to consider.

1. **Effects:** what do you want the magic item to do? General guidelines include emulating a rite, producing a narrow yet powerful effect, and improving a piece of gear beyond what is available from equipment modifications. Keep in mind the core assumptions of *Jackals* when creating items. Effects that are more common in high fantasy games are out of place in the Bronze Age world of Kalypsis. Additionally, look to the source material mentioned earlier for inspiration.
2. **Who made it?** Once you have your effect, you need to work out which culture created it. If you are emulating a rite, that should be simple enough. In other cases, it might be more difficult. The table below lists the main cultures of the Zaharets their typical reasons for producing magic items, and which materials they generally use for construction.

MAGICAL MATERIALS AND EFFECTS

Culture	Materials	Effects
Hann	Hesoa (moon) stone, orichalcum	Travel, connection, song, elemental powers
Hulathi	Silver, hestul	Travel, far sight, protection, warding, Law
Ger	Bronze, gold, wood	Spirits, warding, artifice
Luathi	Bronze, wood	Knowledge, light, warding, flame, Law
Melkoni	Bronze, wood	Defence, love, healing, Law
Mouadah	Mouahalan (black bronze), bronze, iron	Darkness, bondage, enslavement, cold, ice
Takan	Iron, bronze, bone	Darkness, summoning, Chaos, Corruption
Trauj	Bone, bronze, petrified wood	Survival, remembrance, animal husbandry, slaying Takan

3. **What are the limits or costs?** In *Jackals*, all magic has a cost, a payment to the power that fuels the magic. In many cases, this is a limit put on the magic's usability: once per day for minor effects or once per week for major effects are good baselines for starting limits. The Loremaster can limit more-powerful effects to once per season, or have them cause damage to or hamper the Jackal in some way. A requirement to use Fate Points or Clash Points to activate the item, or the item causing damage to the

bearer are other examples of how costs can work. See the Spear of Ahahu eth Auram for such an effect.

4. **Review:** It is always a good idea to compare a new magic item to those in this book or those already in your campaign. Balance is a tricky thing, and although obsessive game balance is not necessary or expected in *Jackals*, it is good to take a step back and err on the side of caution. It is always easier to remove limits and limitations than it is to impose them later.

Awakening an Item to Greatness

A Loremaster can allow items to awaken to greatness, turning an item a Jackal already possesses into a magical item owing to its use. This allows a Jackal's weapon to become poisoned after defeating a Nyssalis, or their armour to give additional protection against fire after they bathe it in the blood of a Nehushta.

For this to happen, two requirements must occur. First, the character must have spent a Fate Point on a roll to re-roll the result. Second, this this re-roll must result in a critical. If this situation occurs, there is the possibility that an item used in the roll may awaken. The Loremaster should roll against the Jackal's Wisdom ×3. If this roll is a success, the Loremaster can rule that the item has awoken to greatness. In this case, the item becomes a magical item, per the guidelines above. Loremasters should ensure that the effect granted to the item is based on the circumstances of the incident that awoke the item. If the roll fails, the item is not impacted by fate at this time.

EXAMPLE OF AN ITEM AWAKENING TO GREATNESS

Bet and her allies are fleeing a horde of Rapiuma in a forgotten Mouadah temple. They come to a locked door, which traps them. Bet immediately drops to her knees and begins to pick the lock. After failing the initial roll, Bet says a prayer to the Eight and spends a Fate Point to re-roll. She rolls a 66%, which is a critical! JM, the Loremaster, quietly rolls a d100 against Bet's Wisdom × 5 (50%), rolling a 32%. The lock picks awaken to greatness, and JM decides that they take on a red finish. He informs Bet that Djhutemos has consecrated her picks and decides that Bet can now spend a Fate Point to open or seal a door without making a roll. This also applies to doors without locks, or ones barred by other methods.

COMMON MAGIC ITEMS

Mouahalan Shield

This is a typical shield of a warrior of Mouadah. It is a round shield, made of a light yet strong black metal. Unknown hands engraved it with a scene depicting a faceless giant standing atop a pile of broken bodies. It is the shield of one of the Priest-King's bodyguards, carried at the height of Mouadah's power.

- Grants 2 Protection (total)
- Encumbrance of 0
- Grants the bearer the Interpose talent, even if they do not qualify for it. If the bearer already has the talent, reduce the cost of the first use of Interpose each round by 1.

Rod of Densom

Sari Avi knows the secrets of making these rods, which have been passed down from Sari to Sar over three generations. They require the heartwood of one of the great trees of the Aeco Wood, resin from an acalana tree, and water from one of the sacred wells. The Rods of Densom are about 30 inches in length, and as thick around as a Luathi's forearm. They typically have a dark sheen to them and smell of fresh acalana, due to the resin. Occasionally, they will bud. These rods possess the following qualities:

- Counts as a medium one-handed weapon
- +2 damage to Takan
- +2 to all Healing rolls
- +15% to all Survival rolls in the Aeco Woods or Aeco Plains
- 25% chance each season to produce 1d4 buds. Each bud acts as one dose of acalana resin.

Tablet of the Scriptorium

Hasheers create these tablets using guarded rites at the Scriptorium of Ameena Noani. They appear as a standard scribe's tablet, complete with wax interior for taking notes. However, they possess two remarkable characteristics. First, the Hasheer pair them with another tablet in the Scriptorium. This rite enables everything written in the travelling tablet to appear on the tablet in the Scriptorium, so scribes can record what is written and enter it into the Scriptorium records. Second, a high-ranking Hasheer knows the rites to send a message to a specific tablet, allowing the Scriptorium to communicate with valuable agents. The owner can smooth the wax to erase the tablet so they can send and receive new messages.

RARE MAGIC ITEMS

Brazier of Sending

The Hann created and used these strange braziers. Orichalcum is a red coppery metal used exclusively by the Hann, and each brazier and its legs are all made from the mysterious metal. Engraved on the outside of the bowl are stark figures in procession around the outer rim. Inside the brazier is a relief of the night sky, with familiar constellations. However, only one moon is prominent, and it is not one of the three that now grace the night sky. In fact, close examination does reveal the presence of Kauma, Gai, and Oura, but the engravers did not give them a place of prominence. This seems to be a fourth moon. Studying this item for a week grants +5% to Ancient Lore.

The Hann used these braziers to bind spirits of Mephis to carry messages across great distances.. Burning coals in the brazier creates a massive cloud of smoke, which hovers over the one who lit them. Should this person, within two minutes, mention another living person within 500 miles and give a message, the smoke cloud flies off to deliver it. Should the message mention multiple recipients, the cloud divides itself to deliver the message to up to eight recipients.

A character can invoke this effect once per week.

The Hand of Zikar

The dried blood of its former owner stains the wrist and palm of this mummified hand. Legends say Zikar was a Kahar of Alwain, whose hand was bitten off by a vicious Atakan. The Kahar's zeal burned the Atakan, causing the creature no end of torment and pain. It vomited up the hand before dying, and Zikar's allies recovered it. The zeal of Zikar still resides in the dead Kahar's hand, preserving it from total decay.

The hand provides the following abilities:

- 6 Devotion Points to a Kahar
- By whispering a prayer to Alwain, the hand glows with the Light of Dawn, twice a day for 1 hour
- If used as a weapon against creatures with a Corruption of 10 or higher, the hand inflicts 1d10 + Damage Bonus (if any).

The Six Golden Tumours of the Dagonim

These solid gold tumours once resided in the ancient Hulathi kingdom of Kelesh, across the mountains. In those days, the Mouadran city of Ugat won a great victory over Kelesh. During that battle, the Ugatim claimed fragments of the Tablets of Law from the son of the king of Kelesh. The Ugatim placed these holy artefacts in their temple to Dagon. In retribution, Alwain cursed the people of Ugat with foul and horrid growths under their skin. The diviners of Mouadah understood what they must do and returned the tablet fragments, along with a gift of six golden tumours, which were cast from those drawn from the thighs of the royal princes of Ugat. When the Ugatim returned the fragments to Kelesh, Alwain lifted the plague.

During the great wars of the Kharab, the people of Kelesh across the mountains lost these tumours, as Takan and Hulathi nobles carried them off as spoils. The Trauj clans discovered a few in ancient ruins. At this point, two are known to the peoples of the Zaharets. One resides with the Yahtahmi of the Arrow Clan, and another sits in the great temple of Alwain in Ameena Noani.

These golden tumours retain both the power of healing and that of the initial disease. Kahars of Alwain, Hasheers, and Mouathenic can access their powers:

- +25% to Endurance checks versus diseases
- +20% to Healing checks to treat diseases
- Kahars can reduce the Devotion costs of the Balm of Kahar by one point per tumour carried.
- Mouathenics and Hasheers can release the original plague by grinding up the tumour and pouring the golden powder into a water supply. If a ritualist uses this power against other humans, the ritualist gains 15 Corruption Points.

Silver Trumpet of Hannoi

The Hann carved the bell of this silvered horn with the image of an impressive city, while they covered the pipe with images of hundreds of shooting stars that extend from the mouthpiece towards the city. Once per day, the owner of the horn can sound it, which causes the story of the falling stars to come to life. The horn blasts a 10-yard-long by 1-yard-wide cone of flame from its end, dealing 1d10 fire damage to all those it covers. A successful Dodge check reduces the damage by half. The flames are so hot that they ignore armour. If a human blows the horn, the magic of the horn does not protect them – it inflicts an equal amount of damage to the sounder.

The Spear of Ahahu eth Auram

The haft of this spear appears to be made of hestul and the blade of some white metal. Hulathii scripts cover the length of the haft, and the inscriptions are in differing styles. Studying the spear, and translating the text, provides +5% Ancient Lore. Should a Jackal make a successful Ancient Lore check, they can translate the inscriptions. The first and longest inscription says:

> *The third of the house of King Futhenenken II, daughter of Auram, in the 113th year of this kingdom of the land, crafted this spear to slay the Dagonim that feasted on the hearts of the children in Ameena Noani.*

The second script is a fragment from an older verse, which Hasheers might recognise as the *Lay of Futhenais*:

> *When Gee had led his family west,*
> *Following the sun.*
> *Searching for a land to own,*
> *A length of sward to run.*
> *With their father came seven sons*
> *Fierce of countenance.*
> *Limbs like gods, all sheathed in bronze,*
> *Their shields a glittering fence.*

The spear possesses the following qualities:

- +1d6 damage
- Can damage spirits, the dead, and Rathic (reduces their Protection to 0)
- The spear-head glows with white light in the presence of spirits, the dead, or Rathic
- Deals 5 damage per round to the bearer while the spear is glowing, unless they attack spirits, the dead, or Rathic.

HIRELINGS

The Zaharets are a dangerous land; often, Jackals find safety in numbers and may hire others to follow them into the wilds. The general term for these NPC allies, acolytes, or warriors is *hirelings*. All hirelings begin with the following stat block and must be outfitted before they can accompany a Jackal.

HIRELING			
Type:	Human	Location:	Everywhere
Defence:	30%	Valour:	24
Combat:	30%	Wounds:	12
Knowledge:	40%	Protection:	by armour
Urban:	40%	Move:	13
Common:	45%	Initiative:	12
		Clash Points:	2
Special Abilities			
None			

A hireling will demand a half share of all shekels from the adventure and earns one advancement per season of adventure, although they advance differently than Jackals. Each advancement a hireling earns provides one of the following benefits:

- Give the hireling a Clash Point (maximum of 6)
- Increase the hireling's Wounds by 1 and their Valour by 3.
- Add 5% to a skill category.

Hirelings are not full Jackals, but Fate might one day call upon them to step into that role. When a Jackal dies, the player can select their new character from one of the party's hirelings. In this case, the player makes the new character and then applies all the advancements the hireling has gained to their new character.

EXAMPLE OF HIRELINGS

In JM's game, the party gained the services of Leodias, a Melkoni henchmen. Over the course of the game, Leodias gained ten advancements in the service of the Jackals. When Becca's character, Rahma, died fighting a ravenous Atakan, Becca made the decision to play as Leodias. After making him as a starting character, Becca applied ten active advancements to Leodias (those he earned during play) before beginning play with this character.

KLEOS

A Jackal's Kleos is a measure of their renown along the War Road. This is both a positive and a negative thing. The more renowned a Jackal is, the more the patrons and communities of the Zaharets welcome them. They find it is easier to accept the Jackal they know, rather than the Jackal they do not. Thus, Kleos opens up new avenues and options for the Jackal.

However, Kleos comes at a cost. The more renowned a Jackal is, the more the forces of Chaos want them out of the way. They begin to seek out the Jackal to try to sway them to the side of darkness or slay them. If the Jackal is known to be in a region, the Takan there bolster their forces, the Rathic seek out their dreams, and the Mouathenic visit them with dagger and coin. Eventually, the Jackal faces a decision: continue in this life, or settle down and retire. The choice is up to them.

Loremasters should keep the Kleos score hidden from the players, for people rarely know the reach of their own reputation. The Increase Kleos, Acquire Patron, and Establish Home seasonal actions are the only ways in which the characters interact directly with their reputations (see those specific actions for further rules).

KLEOS ADVANCEMENT

There are ten Kleos levels in *Jackals*, which we list here. Each level requires a certain number of points to advance to the next level. Every active advancement the character earns contributes to their Kleos score, as it is a measure of how well they have done on adventures. Passive advancements do no count towards a character's Kleos.

KLEOS LEVELS			
Kleos Level	Title	Advancements Required	Effect
1	Unblooded	1	Starting Jackal, no bonuses or penalties
2	Unknown	7	Able to acquire a patron level 1
3	Tolerated	13	Able to acquire a patron level 2
4	Recognised	22	Able to acquire a patron level 3, Animosity I, Recognition I
5	Regarded	37	Able to acquire a patron level 4, Dreams I
6	Welcomed	55	Able to acquire a patron level 5, Recognition II
7	Accepted	73	Animosity II, Coercion I
8	Favoured	97	Dreams II, Recognition III
9	Defender of (culture)	109	Animosity III, Coercion II
10	Champion of (culture)	182	Recognition IV

ANIMOSITY

As a Jackal's Kleos increases, the forces of Chaos begin to take notice of them. They begin to hunt down the character and seek them out in battle, attempting to increase their own glory by slaying a Jackal of renown. At the first level of Animosity, the Loremaster takes the highest Kleos level in the party, divides it in half (rounding down), and uses this as the number of (hypothetical) extra PCs in the fight when building encounters.

At the second level, Takan and other dark forces actively seek to end the Jackal's life. Once per year, the Loremaster should prepare an encounter during an adventure that specifically targets the life of the character with Animosity II. This represents the forces of Chaos seeking to remove an obstacle from their path. Additionally, all foes now add Clash Points to their pool equal to the highest Kleos level in the party, divided in half. However, should the Jackal in question possess 15+ Corruption or have given into to a Coercion event (see below) they are immune to the additional effects of Animosity II.

At the third level, the faceless forces of Chaos coalesce behind a nemesis. The Loremaster should create a named NPC with the forces and resources to attack the Jackal until they retire or slay this new foe. Mouathenic, Rathic, and Oritakan serve as excellent starting points for a nemesis.

EXAMPLE OF ANIMOSITY

Phamea possesses a Kleos of 7, the highest among her fellow Jackals. She is one of four members of a Jackal pack. However, when planning encounters, the Loremaster counts the group as possessing seven members (four actual members plus three hypothetical ones calculated from Phamea's reputation – that is, her Kleos level divided by two and rounded down to three).

COERCION

Not all forces of Chaos seek to kill a renowned Jackal. Some seek to corrupt them and lure them to the side of darkness. When a Jackal attains a level of Kleos that provokes a Coercion event, during that year, a chaotic being arrives to tempt the Jackal. Loremasters should ensure that this temptation is not superficial or lacking. Power, artefacts, rites, health, eternal life, a sure path to goals, etc. should all be on the table. The goal here is to present the other side in all its seductive glory. Chaos does not always present itself as foul – it can wrap itself in beauty to achieve its ends.

Another Coercion tactic is to create a problem that only the chaotic being can solve. Perhaps a Hekas poisons a Jackal's loved one with a rare poison, or a settlement is threatened with a Takan army. The coercer shows up and offers their services for a small price, an act of Devotion, and a large amount of Corruption. Giving in to the tempting deal should always have lasting consequences, both mechanically and narratively; 8–10 points of Corruption, the death of an innocent, stolen artefacts, or recovered rites are all examples of consequences that could result from dealing with darkness.

Mouathenics and Rathic are usually the types of beings who engage in this activity.

DREAMS

As the Jackal increases in renown, the world takes notice. The Jackal receives a prophetic dream about some event within the next three years. Loremasters might seek to foreshadow events, and in *The Fall of the Children of Bronze*, such dreams are provided.

Where the dreams come from depends on the Jackal's Corruption level. If they have fewer than 5 Corruption, the vision is about opposing the growing darkness in the Zaharets. If they have 6–12 Corruption, it is a warning to repent or face the consequences of their actions. If they possess 13+ Corruption, the Jackal receives a dream from the chaotic forces in the world, showing them a path to greater power.

In the Zaharets, dreams are the primary method of communication between the supernatural realm and humanity. They should be cryptic and heavily symbolic. If you need inspiration for such dreams, see how ancient authors deal with dreams in *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, *The Aeneid*, or *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, or even reference the Book of Ezekiel, the prophets of the Old Testament, the Book of Enoch, or the Book of Revelation.

RECOGNITION

Recognition is a way for the Loremaster to show the Jackal's increase in Kleos. Each level of Recognition shows how far the Jackal's renown has spread along the War Road. At Recognition I, the common folk of the settlement in which the Jackal is active know and recognise the Jackal. At Recognition II, the Jackal's renown has spread to the rulers of that settlement and into the surrounding region. At Recognition III, the Jackal is recognisable to all in their region, and even those in faraway settlements might recognise them. Finally, at Recognition IV, most people have heard of this Jackal, even if they might not know who they are talking to. Each level of Recognition provides a +5% bonus for dealing with a Jackal's own culture, due to the Jackal's reputation.

SEASONAL ACTIONS

One of the core concepts of *Jackals* is that Jackals are society's outcasts. They roam the War Road, taking dangerous jobs from settlements that appreciate their service, but do not value them as part of the community. The adventuring phase of the game reinforces this conceit. However, all of the cultures value community; it binds them together as a people, and gives them something to protect, value, and cultivate. All people, even Jackals, desire that connection. So how does a Jackal balance this desire with their lifestyle? Seasonal actions provide the counterbalance to the lure of the War Road.

Between each season, Jackals can engage one seasonal action to further their own goals, seek out new rumours, craft new items, or bond with a community. Each seasonal action provides different ways for Jackals to improve their situation, tying them more closely to communities that initially viewed them with indifference or hostility. Eventually, the seasonal actions can drive a player to an important decision: keep playing as their Jackal and risk death; or settle down and become part of the community they have grown to defend.

Although some seasonal actions might seem quick and simple, such as donating to the temple to reduce Corruption, the seasonal action represents more than just a transaction. It represents the time the Jackal spends working their way through society, gaining access to people and places, participating in rites, and so on. As such, each Jackal can only take one action per season.

A character may spend a Fate Point on a seasonal action, but if they do so they will not have access to that Fate Point for the first adventure of the following season.

Loremasters should work with the player to narrate their character's seasonal action. How did they get an audience with their patron? What did they do while finding rumours or increasing Kleos? These vignettes can provide ideas for adventures and deepen a Jackal's connection to the world.

These seasonal actions are always available:

- Atone
- Carouse
- Craft or Commision an Item
- Find Rumours
- Increase Kleos
- Research

To take these seasonal actions, the Jackal must first meet the prerequisites:

- Aquire Patron – the Jackal must have enough Kleos and skill to impress the patron
- Establish Home – the Jackal must have a level 3 patronage with a patron in the town
- Hospitality – the Jackal must have a home

ATONE

This action enables a Jackal to remove Corruption, per the Atonement rules on page 156.

CAROUSE

Jackals are infamous for their revelries, especially when returning to town after raiding some old tomb. This often leads to moments of epiphany as they reflect on the experiences of the road. A Jackal can exchange 250 ss for 1 active advancement, up to a maximum of 1,000 shekels of silver for 4 advancements. A Jackal can only take this seasonal action once per year.

CRAFT OR COMMISION AN ITEM

A Jackal can attempt to craft a new item, using any of the Craft skills or talents they possess. When crafting an item during a seasonal action, the Jackal must pay the base cost of the item + 25% of the base cost per trait added. A Jackal can attempt to craft additional items by dividing their skill among the attempts, much like making multiple attacks. If the Jackal fails this Craft check, they lose all components and shekels spent.

If the Jackal attempts to commission an item, they must pay the base cost of the item x2, +50% of the base cost per trait. They must then attempt a Trade check to see if they can find someone who can make the item for them. On a failure, they lose half the shekels, which represents spending it in the attempt to find a worthy tradesman. On a fumble, they spend all the shekels, but get a piece of shoddy gear (it has negative traits equal to the number of positive traits they were seeking).

EXAMPLE OF CRAFTING AN ITEM

Chris decides to have his character craft a new spear and Melkoni shield. His Craft skill is 150%. For the spear, he chooses to apply +1 damage, and for the shield, he chooses to apply +10% Endurance and +1 Protection. The base cost of the spear is 100 ss, so crafting it with +1 damage costs him 125 ss. The base cost of a Melkoni shield is 200 ss, so crafting it with two traits (+1 Protection and +10% Endurance) costs him 300 ss. He could even attempt to craft both in the same seasonal action by splitting his Craft skill into two 75% skill checks.

FIND RUMOUR

A Jackal can turn money into rumours, which provide them trails to follow when the next season starts. They can spend 100 ss, spreading the wealth around the settlement, and make an Influence check. This also allows Jackals to find specific people, places, or items they want to track down. The Jackal can find rumours about town (use the tables below) or information on specific items, people, or adventure hooks they wish to investigate.

A Jackal can increase their Influence skill by 1% for every additional 10 shekels they spend on the roll, up to a maximum of 300 ss and +30%.

Influence Result	Rumour
Fumble	Trap – The rumour leads the Jackals into a trap. Wolves, Assassins, or other NPCs relevant to the campaign ambush the characters.
Failure	Nothing new this season
Success	Rumour
Critical	Extraordinary rumour

When a character passes the Influence check, the Loremaster should: have them roll a d12 to select a rumour from the Rumours table below; select a region-appropriate rumour from Chapter 9; or give the Jackal a rumour for an adventure of the Loremaster's own making.

RUMOURS	
1d12	Rumour
1	A group of Takan have taken a caravan. Their camp must be near the site of the caravan's disappearance.
2	A Melkoni in the area has been talking about an easy job, excavating a ruin out in the mountains.
3	A Gerwa merchant is telling all who will listen that there is money to be made in the south, if people are willing to go to war for the Kiani.
4	A large group of Trauj have set up a camp in the hills nearby. They are readying for (roll a d4): 1, battle; 2, a festival; 3, trade; 4, selling horses.
5	People found a Retakan's body in the centre of a small village's square. Someone slew it in hand-to-hand combat, but no one is coming forward to claim the deed.
6	One of the small villages along the War Road is seeking Jackals. They are willing to pay with silver.
7	The Sar of the region has been seeking counsel from dead ancestors.
8	A shepherd claims to have received a vision from Alwain. The local Kahar wants to find out if it is genuine.
9	Weapons have begun to break around town. It all comes back to a single redsmith, who claims the bronze was good when he sold it.
10	A few people have gone missing in the area. Not enough to alarm the general populace, but enough that some people are starting to take notice.
11	Two wealthy members of the community have come to blows over a field. They are hiring Jackals to claim the land for them.
12	A member of another culture approaches the Jackal, informing them that a festival of great importance to their culture is about to take place, and they are without some exotic components. They are willing to hire the Jackal to acquire them within the week.

EXTRAORDINARY RUMOURS	
1d10	Rumours
1	A mysterious ship of white wood has been sighted in the Futhetia Sea.
2	In the Aeco Plains/Vori Wastes there is an ancient basalt altar, which seems to always be splashed with fresh blood.
3	A great Trauj chieftainess is seeking a worthy champion, and has opened the competition up to everyone.
4	The Melkoni wars in the west are going poorly for them, and the influx of recent refugees speak of great beings of darkness and thunder that have joined with one of the city-states. But the reports of which city-state always differ.
5	Hen-he-net's caravans discovered a ruin. It is of eastern origin, and the last three Jackal packs sent inside have died. She is paying to have it examined.
6	The White Mark plague has been spotted among the local beggars!
7	A merchant in a small village not far from here found something inhuman in their cellar. No one knows how it got into the cellar, what it was doing there, what it was, or how it died.
8	Orsem Ven uncovered a massive vein of gold in the mountains. There is a rush to see what else people can find!
9	A piece of the old moon road can be found not far from here, if someone had a map to the right location.
10	Someone important to the town is not what they seem. They are a Rephaim possessing the body of a dead citizen.

When a character rolls a critical on their Influence check, the Loremaster should: have them roll a d10 to select one rumour from the Extraordinary Rumours table above; select a region-appropriate rumour from Chapter 7; or give the Jackal a rumour for an adventure of the Loremaster's own making.

INCREASE KLEOS

A Jackal can increase their Kleos if they find they are unable to open a new patron level or wish to be better recognised, or if they want to retire a character. Every 200 ss (to a maximum of 1,000 ss) spent on this action increases their advancements, for the purposes of calculating their Kleos rating, by 1d4. This represents parties thrown, palms greased, or poems composed in honour of the Jackal and their deeds.

The Rohlin Rule: If a player composes the poem people sing about their Jackal's exploits, they receive a +1 to each die rolled for Kleos Increase this season.

RESEARCH

There may be times when a Jackal wants to learn more about a specific topic or learn a new rite from a teacher on a different part of the War Road. The Loremaster should decide where the information can be found (or select a place for the Jackal to learn a rite from the locations in Chapter 5). This seasonal action is resolved with two skill checks. The first is a Survival check, representing the travel to and from the distant location. Use the modifiers found on page 57 for resolving this check. Any Mettle loss suffered during this trip is applied as a penalty for the first adventure of the next season. The second check is a Culture (appropriate) or Lore check to determine whether the Jackal finds what they are looking for. This check is modified by the difficulty the Jackal would have in finding the information. The rarer the information, the more difficult the task. The Jackal must pay 300 ss to learn a rite or discover information of a normal difficulty. Each degree of difficulty beyond normal doubles the cost of this action.

At the Loremaster's discretion, this action could be the basis of a full adventure.

ACQUIRE PATRON

Jackals find it beneficial to cultivate relationships with the powers of the War Road. Patrons provide equipment, employment, and other benefits for the Jackals in their employ, as well as offering legitimacy for their continued presence in settlements. When a Jackal takes this action, they must spend 250 ss multiplied by the level of connection they want to achieve, and make a Culture check (Own or Other, depending on the cultural relationship with the prospective patron) with the following modifiers:

- +10% if they have just completed an adventure the prospective patron commissioned
- −10% if they were arrogant during the last interaction
- −10% if they failed or blundered an adventure the prospective patron commissioned
- −1% per point of Corruption
- +5% per 150 ss donated to the would-be patron's sphere of influence
- +3% per Kleos level if of the same culture as the would-be patron, city, or region.

If the Jackal succeeds on their Culture check, that NPC becomes a patron for the Jackal. Each patron has six levels of connection:

0. **Unknown** – no special benefits.
1. **Aware** – the patron's people begin to recognise the Jackal. They trust the Jackal with missions the patron wishes to see accomplished, but that are not personal in nature or vital to the survival of the community. The Jackal receives a token upon achieving this level of patronage. They also receive +10% to Influence and Culture checks with their patron and their organisation. Additionally, the Loremaster should provide one adventure hook per year from the patron for the Jackal, which they are free to investigate or ignore.
2. **Blooded** – the patron is aware of the Jackal. They provide a place for the Jackal to stay within their purview. Additionally, the requests the patron entrusts to the Jackal have greater importance, along with greater rewards and support. The Jackal can expect 200 ss in requisitioned gear while on missions for this patron, which the patron expects the Jackal to use or return to them.
3. **Known** – the Jackal is known to the patron. They open the Establish Home seasonal action for the Jackal. Additionally, the Jackal gains periphery access to the patron's circles and a special benefit per patron, as listed below. The patron increases the Jackal's requisition ability to 400 ss worth of gear.
4. **Trusted** – the Jackal is a trusted member of the patron's household. The patron counts on the Jackal for tasks vital to their interests, and trusts them with the security of their settlement. At this level, the patron gifts the Jackal with an item of great importance (either a well-crafted item with 3–4 traits, or a magic item) as a sign of the patron's faith in them.
5. **Exalted** – this is the highest level a Jackal can attain with a patron. They are a member of their patron's community. The patron increases the Jackal's requisition ability to nearly anything within reason to get the job done, including people (see Hirelings, page 173). The Jackal unlocks their patron's exalted benefit, as well.

All Jackals start at level 0 (Unknown) with all patrons. Any Jackal can attempt to achieve patron level 1 (Aware) with any patron. After that, reputation alone is not enough to capture a patron's interest. Each patron values different skills in Jackals – skills that will advance their interests and agendas – which are listed in the patron entries. Consult the table below to see the requirements for each patron level:

PATRON REQUIREMENTS

Patron Level	Kleos Requirement	Skill Requirement
1	0	0%
2	3	30%
3	5	50%
4	7	75%
5	8	90%

EXAMPLE OF ACQUIRING PATRON

Bet wants to gain Ba-en Nafar as a Trusted patron (level 4). She can do this, as she has a Kleos value of level 7 and a Survival skill of over 75%. She spends 1000 ss (250 ss × level 4) and rolls a Culture (Own) check, adding +10% for having just completed an adventure for him.

Patrons of the Zaharets

Each patron is listed by name, skill requirement, region, and sphere of influence. Additionally, there is a brief description of them as an NPC, along with any special benefits they provide to Jackals.

BA-EN NAFAR – GERWA

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Survival	Sentem	Combat

Ba-en Nafar is the blood brother and right hand of Sameel ben Jepesh in Sentem. The Gerwa man was once a Jackal, but saved Sameel's life in the battle that claimed Jepesh's eldest son, and the two have been inseparable since. Ba-en handles most of the day-to-day decisions in Sentem, sitting with the wise of the city in the gates. He is always looking for new Jackals to expand his network, as he wishes Sameel's plan for a southern kingdom to become reality. However, Ba-en is willing to use more underhanded techniques to see this vision come to light. He also distrusts Kahar Nabal's small enclave to the west; he does not see the Kahar giving up his power to join with Sameel.

Known Benefit: Ba-en is concerned with the growing Takan influence in the plains. Additionally, he is looking for Jackals to report on Kahar Nabal's settlement in the west. Ba-en gifts his agents with a Hekas dream token, which allows them to send and receive dream messages from Ba-en. No one knows where Ba-en gets these tokens, or how they are made.

Exalted Benefit: Ba-en, depending on the intelligence he is receiving concerning Nabal, will seek to enfold Nabal into Sentem or remove him from power. Additionally, he is concerned that there are agents of Ameena Noani at work in the plains who see Sentem as the next major part of a northern kingdom. He sends his Jackals to work against these agents. Ba-en will also imbue one of the Jackal's items with Hekas rites, binding one of the Gerwa Ba to it. This grants the wielder the services of a Ba (see page 220) for 10 minutes per day.

HEN-HE-NET – GERWA

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Deception	Ameena Noani	Mercantile

The Gerwa merchant Hen-he-net is a staple of the grand market of Ameena Noani. She has caravans that run the length of the War Road, out to the Trauj clans in the Luasa Desert, and to the west of Kroryla. She is a popular and well-connected merchant in the city, and has been known to work for the Sar and the Scriptorium. She is always looking for more Jackals to guard her caravans, run down rumours, and collect on debts for her.

Known Benefit: Hen-he-net opens her network to the Jackal. The Jackal can now purchase one item at 25% of cost after completing a job for Hen-he-net. These jobs are usually courier related, collections on debts, or involve the recovery/liberation of items. Occasionally, she will have the Jackal handle the delivery of goods or act as a caravan guard.

Exalted Benefit: Only now does the Jackal learn that Hen-he-net is a spy for Ger. The Loremaster, when revealing this, should come up with ways to re-interpret the jobs the Jackal has done for Hen-he-net in light of this revelation. She needs Jackals who are highly placed among the patrons of the Zaharets (or who have friends who are). Hen-he-net pays for any additional Acquire Patron costs or provides 'loans' for the Jackal's friends who take that action. She will also buy information gained from these relationships for 500–1,000 ss. Hen-he-net promises a retiring Jackal a life of luxury in the court of a Kiani of Ger, should they want it.

KAHAR NABAL – LUATHI

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Influence	Sentem	Spiritual

Kahar Nabal is the head of the Temple of the Morning Lord, the old ruin he is renovating. His goal is to make it as grand and important as the main temple in Ameena Noani. The ruin is a trove of ancient artefacts, many of which Nabal cannot decipher. One such relic is the tablet that holds a possible remedy for Sar Jepesh's illness. Nabal is an arrogant man, filled with grand plans, but needs competent allies to see them come to fruition. He needs Jackals who can help bind the temple and Sentem together, and who have the vision to see the Temple of the Morning Lord become the seat of Alwainism in the Zaharets.

Known Benefit: Kahar Nabal is in need of stone to continue building his temple. He wants to send Jackals out into the A'hule Asa to secure rare deposits of marble from the mountains or hestul from the ruins in the area. Kahar Nabal will provide healing rites and rooms for those who are known to him.

Exalted Benefit: in terms of his own plans, Kahar Nabal believes Sameel is a better Sar for Sentem than Jepesh. Although he is willing to help Jepesh recover, this act is aimed more at binding Sameel to him than helping Jepesh. He will recruit Jackals to aid Sameel's plans, even if they are contrary to Jepesh's. Additionally, Nabal believes that war with Ameena Noani is inevitable, and seeks power from the ruins of Ouwa Ejo. He has found what he believes is a key for the silvered gates. He will gift that to a group of Jackals who can explore the ruins for him.

HASHEER TOARA OF THE SCRIPTORIUM – LUATHI

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Lore	Ameena Noani	Lore

Toara is the chief Hasheer of the Scriptorium in Ameena Noani. Under her wisdom, the Scriptorium has thrived, growing to over 150 Hasheers. Within the red walls, the scribes and Hasheers collect, delve, and explore knowledge and rites gathered from around the Zaharets. Toara has recently become plagued by visions of an ironbound tree and black gates rising in the desert. She has begun to commission Jackals and send them out further into the wastes, and the desert, and to other enclaves of knowledge. She seeks answers and interpretations for her dreams, and the power to stop them.

Known Benefit: once a Jackal becomes known to Toara, she grants them access to the Scriptorium once per season. While studying in the Scriptorium, the Jackal gains +25% to their Lore and Ancient Lore skills. This might allow them to temporarily have access to a talent during this time. Additionally, Toara will always buy information and goods the Jackal comes across in their journeys. Toara seeks peace in the north, guiding Phamea to consolidate the rule of Law. She will send her agents throughout the area of Ameena Noani to aid the Sari.

Exalted Benefit: Toara can bring the considerable knowledge of the Scriptorium to bear on behalf of the Jackal. She can fulfil any research requests, as well as provide deeper knowledge of ancient Hann, Hulathi, and Mouadah sites. Additionally, Toara believes she has found a Hulathi refuge, a place where the masters of the Grand Kingdoms might have retreated in the face of the last great war. She desires to send a trusted Jackal to investigate it for her. Toara gifts a Jackal of this level with one of the tablets of the Scriptorium.

NAWSI NAMAR – LUATHI

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Melee or Ranged Combat	Orsem Yahan	Combat

Namar is the captain of Orsem Yahan and takes his duty very seriously. Yahan has become a trading outpost, military fort, and burgeoning town. Namar routinely hires Jackals as expendable labour to keep the area around the fort clear of Takan, to safeguard caravans from the desert, and to cull the population of Wolves (bandits). While utterly loyal to Sari Phamea, Namar's vision is much smaller than his leader's; he just wants to keep those under his responsibility safe.

Known Benefit: A known Jackal can count on a place to stay inside the orsem with the Nawsi's warriors. Namar is worried about the growing threat of the spirits of the Ligna Hualla, and would like to send Jackals into the forest to uncover what has caused them to grow so aggressive. Namar will commission a fine bronze weapon or armour for a known Jackal, with two traits of their choice.

Exalted Benefit: At this point, Namar invites the Jackal into his inner circle, as a full member of the Yahan warriors. He is interested in hiring some of the Arrow Clan to settle in the hills outside the fort, both for defence and as a way to attract more Trauj trade to the area. He will send this Jackal out as his ambassador. Namar has a strange golden-metal spearhead that he will give to the exalted Jackal, something from Namar's own days on the War Road. The spearhead ignores 4 points of Protection, and additionally gifts the wielder with 2 Clash Points and the ability to heal 1 Wound per round when they are in their third row of Wounds. If the Jackal is willing to retire, Namar would give them a sub-captain role in the fort, setting them in charge of the orsem's defence.

NAWSI SAMEEL – LUATHI

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Influence	Sentem	Combat and politics

Sameel is the second, and only surviving, son of Sar Jepesh of Sentem. With his father's mysterious malady taking him out of commission, Sameel has taken over running Sentem. Jepesh had already declared Sameel as his Nawsi, and although he is acting as the city's Sar, Sameel refuses to take this appellation. That is his father's title, and Sameel holds out hope that Jepesh will recover. Sameel is preoccupied with ensuring the city continues to blossom, establishing the rule of Law across the Aeco Plains, and clearing out Bartak Kentak once and for all.

Known Benefit: Sameel will open up about his father's malady and the potential for a cure found on an old Hannic tablet. Additionally, he will offer one of the orsems to the Jackal, assuming they can clear out the old tower. Finally, he will grant them one of the Yesim clan tokens, marking the Jackal as one of Sameel's mighty Warriors. This badge provides +2 Clash Points while battling Takan.

Exalted Benefit: Sameel will bring the Jackal into his inner circle. This includes revealing his plan for expanding Sentem's influence north along the War Road. He will hire the Jackal to act as his ambassador along the road, and invite them on the annual raids into Bartak Kentak. Should Jepesh die, Sameel will consider the Jackal as a replacement Nawsi, should they wish to retire. Additionally, Sameel gifts the Jackal with a small squad of 2d4 warriors from Sameel's mighty warriors. These warriors act as hirelings, under the Jackal's command (see page 173 for hireling rules).

SARI PHAMEA – LUATHI

Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Willpower	Ameena Noani	Politics

Sari Phamea took over from Sar Nasim six years ago, after the former Sar was assassinated by unknown means. Since then, Phamea has expanded the Scriptorium, built Orsem Ven, and stabilised the region in the north. Takan no longer roam the lands within her control, and Jackals can explore towards the edge of the realm to find work. The Luathi of Ameena Noani are experiencing a time of peace and prosperity unknown since the fall of Barak Barad. Phamea has one goal: to extend the kingdom of Ameena Noani along the War Road. Already, her agents are at work in and around Sentem, learning the climate and culture there. Within the next decade, she plans to enfold Sentem, Densom, and all the villages along the coast into the kingdom of Ameena Noani, through diplomacy or force.

Known Benefit: the Jackal can expect a lodging within the Fortress of Gilead, as well as a stipend of 100 ss per month (1,000 ss per year) from the Sari. In exchange, the Sari will expect the Jackal to travel as her agent in the Zaharets. Whether defending shipments from Orsem Ven, exploring ruins the Scriptorium uncovers, or spying on Sentem, Phamea expects complete loyalty from the Jackal. If the Jackal commits even one transgression against her or Ameena Noani, they can expect swift exile or death.

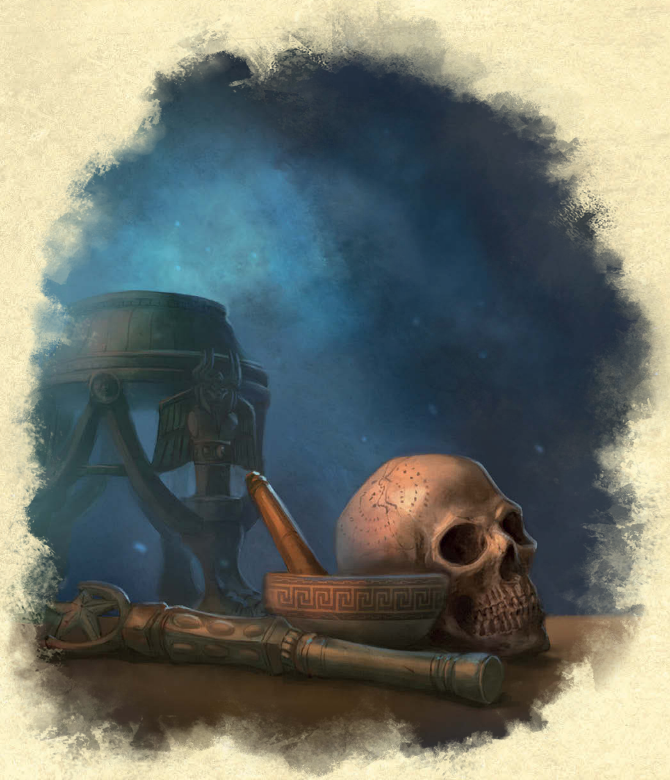
Exalted Benefit: it is rare for a Jackal to rise so far in Phamea's esteem. However, should one do so, they can expect all of Ameena Noani to open up for them. Phamea will trust the Jackal with overseeing her plan against Sentem, up to and including slaying the Yesim family and installing themselves as rulers under Nasim. She will gift the Jackal with a golden necklace of service (worth 1,000 ss and imbued with 2 Fate Points per adventure), as well as a group of 1d4+1d6 hirelings. Phamea will also offer the Jackal a position as Nawsi in her fortress, if they choose to retire.

SARI AVI – LUATHI		
Skill Requirement	Region	Sphere of Influence
Healing	Densom	Politics

The Sari of Densom is a humble matron who cares about the village under her leadership. Its proximity to Bartak Kentak, as well as the growing Corruption in the Aeco Woods, troubles her deeply. While Densom can rarely afford to pay Jackals in shekels, Avi is always able to provide healing herbs, wooden weapons, and shields, as well as chariots and rafts. She is loyal to the Yesim family, and while she is all for securing the Aeco Plains for the Luathi, she worries that expanding beyond that will bring the eye of Ameena Noani their way.

Known Benefit: the Sari lets the Jackal know about the prophecy Alwain gave to her as a child: that one day, the Aeco ayal (spirit deer) would again roam the forest in numbers that could bring peace to the region. She will send Jackals into the wood to find any remaining ayal, even though no one has seen one for two decades. She is also worried about the rumours of the charnel pit in the forest, where the Takan take their captives to sacrifice them to the dark spirit that is slowly corrupting the wood. Sari Avi can provide her known Jackals with two acalana resins per season and the use of the healers of Densom (Healing skill 80%) for free.

Exalted Benefit: Avi will reveal her interest in establishing a new town along the coast and bringing trade into the region. Besides establishing a town, the plan would involve building a fleet of trading ships. She will offer the Jackal a seat on Densom's council and the position of Warden, if they wish to retire. Additionally, Avi will gift the Jackal with a Rod of Densom, a small piece of heartwood that provides several benefits. See page 170 for the Rod of Densom.



ESTABLISH HOME

This action enables a Jackal to establish a home within their community. This home is not just a building, but also a place within the community. By investing in it, a Jackal becomes tied to the community, earns an income, gains benefits, and could perhaps retire there. A home has two statistics: Quality and Level.

To take this action, a Jackal must achieve level 3 (Known) with a patron of the community in which they want to establish a home. The first time the Jackal takes this action, they must purchase or build a place to live. 2,500 ss is sufficient for purchasing a place inside a town or claiming an area outside it.

Benefits of a Home

By investing into a community, the Jackal gets far more than just a secure place to rest and store their gear. Once they make their initial investment, the Jackal enjoys the following benefits:

- For the purposes of increasing Kleos, the Jackal is considered to have +5 advancements (see page 174)
- Resting at home is far more restorative than sleeping elsewhere; increase the Jackal's healing rate when resting in their home to 2d4 per night
- The Jackal opens up a new seasonal action – 'Hospitality'

Level Upgrades

A Jackal can improve their home through further seasonal actions. A Jackal's new home begins at level 0: essentially just a building to use as a house. To updgrade to the next level of quality, the Jackal must pay the cost listed in the table below.

HOME QUALITY		
Quality	Cost	Description
1	2500 ss	A perfectly normal abode
2	5000 ss	Nicer than normal, some minor special quality (such as a view of the fountain in Ameena Noani)
3	10,000 ss	Larger or far nicer than generally available or with a specific feature (such as room for a foundry, a dry cellar for a scriptorium, or a defensive wall)
4	20,000 ss	A Sar-like residence
5	40,000 ss	A ruin or building constructed by one of the ancient peoples

When a Jackal improves their home, they are considered to have another +2 advancements towards increasing Kleos and can either add a feature to their home at level 1, or improve the quality of an existing feature by 1. We list the available features below.

Barracks

The Jackal attempts to build their own fighting force, passing on the wisdom and skill they have learned to a new generation. They attract (1d4 × the quality level of their home) new hirelings to their barracks every year. Each additional time the Jackal improves their barrack's level, they can increase the barracks die they roll for the number of hirelings gained, progressing as follows: 1d4 > 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12. The Jackal can bring hirelings on adventures, or send them out into the Zaharets on their own. Those hirelings will bring back a portion of their plunder to the Jackal. Each year, the Jackal can roll [barracks die + the quality of the home] × 100 and gain that many shekels of silver. If they spend the adventuring season managing the Jackals, they can make the roll every season.

The life of a Jackal is deadly, and each year the barracks will lose Jackals to the War Road. At the end of each year, the Jackal must pay the blood tithe – they roll their barracks die ×2 and lose that many hirelings. The Jackal can subtract the quality of their barracks from this number, representing the fact that better trained and better equipped Jackals survive for longer.

EXAMPLE OF THE BARRACKS FEATURE

Bet has a barracks of quality 2 built in a quality 3 home, so her barracks die is 1d6. Each year, she gains 1d6 × 3 new hirelings and receives (1d6 + 3) × 100 ss if she sends them out on their own.

Bet has 15 hirelings in her barracks. At the end of the year, she must roll 1d6 × 2. She rolls a 3, and so would lose a total of six hirelings to the blood tithe. However, owing to the quality of her barracks, she only loses four (6 – 2 = 4).

Foundry

A Jackal can begin a foundry to forge better weapons and armour for their allies and their community. With a foundry, the Jackal can reduce the cost of producing gear by the quality of the foundry [10% of the total cost × the quality].

Additionally, each season, the foundry produces gear for the community, granting the Jackal two benefits. Firstly, it provides the Jackal with 100 ss worth of raw materials for producing their own gear each year. Each time the Jackal improves their foundry, this production bonus increases by another 100 ss. Secondly, it provides the Jackal with an income of 200 ss × [the quality of the foundry + the quality of the home] each year. If they spend the adventuring season managing the foundry, they can make the roll every season.

EXAMPLE OF THE FOUNDRY FEATURE

Debar has set up a quality 3 foundry in his quality 4 home. This allows him to reduce the cost of producing any gear by 30%. It also provides him with with 300 ss worth of crafting materials and an income of 1,400 ss [(3 + 4) × 200 = 1,400] per year.

Hostel

A Jackal who has spent their life as an itinerant warrior might choose to open their home to others in similar situations. They can open a hostel in a community, providing food, shelter, and camaraderie. Those staying in their hostel can add the quality of the home to all Healing rolls made inside the hostel. Additionally, the hostel provides the Jackal with one free rumour every season.

The hostel provides the Jackal with an income of 100 ss × [the level of the hostel × the quality of the home] each season. If they spend the adventuring season managing the hostel, they may double the value.

EXAMPLE OF THE HOSTEL FEATURE

Malek's quality 3 home has a hostel of quality 2. This provides him with an income of 600 ss per season [3 × 2 × 100 = 600]. It also grants +3 to all Healing rolls made there, and one rumour each season.

Ritual Space (Temple, Scriptorium, or Workshop)

A Jackal can turn their home into a dedicated space for their deities, practices, and rites. They attract 1d4 × the quality of their home in new acolytes to their space every year. Each additional time the Jackal improves the level of their ritual space, they can increase the ritual space die they roll for the number of acolytes, progressing as follows: 1d4 > 1d6 > 1d8 > 1d10 > 1d12.

The Jackal can draw upon the Devotion of their acolytes. The Jackal gains a bonus to Devotion Points equal to the quality of the house for every 12 acolytes. The acolytes also bring in a tithe to the ritual space, a portion of which worshippers donate to the Jackal. Each year, the Jackal can roll [ritual space die + the quality of the home] × 50 and gain that many shekels of silver. If they spend the adventuring season managing the space, they can make the roll every season.

EXAMPLE OF THE RITUAL SPACE FEATURE

Rahma has a home of quality 5 and a temple of quality 2. Each year, she attracts 1d6 × 5 acolytes.

Rahma has 26 acolytes, so she gains an additional 10 Devotion Points [2 × 5 = 10]. At the end of the year, she rolls 1d6 × 5. She rolls a 4 and collects 1000 ss in tithes [(4 × 5) x 50].

HOSPITALITY

A Jackal who possesses a home has a 7% chance per level of Kleos to have the opportunity to host a guest once per year. If the Loremaster rolls a Hospitality event during the dry season, they should not roll again during the wet season. They should roll before the Jackals choose their seasonal actions.

If a Hospitality event occurs, a visitor from a distant region arrives in the area and asks to stay with the Jackal for the season. The Loremaster should roll on the following tables to determine who arrives, and for what reasons – unless the Loremaster already has a guest and reason in mind.

VISITOR	
1d100	Name
1–8%	Hen-he-net
9–16%	Hasheer Toara
17–24%	Nawsi Namar
25–32%	Sari Phamea
33–40%	Ba-en Nafar
41–48%	Kahar Nabal
49–56%	Nawsi Sameel
57–64%	Sari Avi
65–70%	Gerwa trader
71–76%	Melkoni merchant captain
77–82%	Trauj tribal champion
83–88%	Wandering healer
89–94%	Dark wanderer
95–100%	Possessed traveller

REASON FOR VISIT	
1d12	Reason
1	Diplomacy
2	Following dreams
3	Judging the Jackal's Mettle
4	Lost
5	Quest
6	Religious rites
7	Removal of Corruption
8	Researching ruins
9	Scouting
10	Spying
11	Trading
12	Travelling

At this point, the Jackal has two choices. They can refuse the offer to host the guest. If they refuse, the Jackal's Kleos is reduced by one level, as the guest feels spurned by the Jackal; but the Jackal can then choose any regular seasonal action. The spurned guest will go out of their way to ensure this Jackal does not receive work from them for the year, assuming they are a patron or in a position of power.

If the Jackal accepts the role of host for the season, they forgo other seasonal actions; instead, they play host to the visitor. The Jackal must pay 200 ss per level of Kleos they possess. These shekels are for hosting, entertaining, stabling the guest's retinue, and so on. Often, a Jackal might need to refuse to act as host due to the cost of entertaining! However, acting as host has its benefits. First, the Jackal earns one active advancement on any of the following skills: Culture (Own), Culture (Other), Influence, Lore, or Perform. This represents the primary skill the Jackal used to entertain their guest. Second, they receive the benefit of a Find Rumour seasonal action, due to their guest sharing information. Alternatively, the Loremaster can give them a guest-specific rumour or job for the following season. Finally, if the guest is a patron, the Jackal can make an Influence check to increase their patron level with that patron. Or, if the guest is not a patron, the Loremaster can give a different benefit that seems appropriate.

EXAMPLE OF HOSPITALITY

Hegnit, a Kahar in Sentem, has established an altar to Alwain in Densom. Hegnit's Kleos rank is 4, so she has a 28% chance to attract a guest each year. The Loremaster rolls before the characters choose their seasonal actions, and gets 15%. A guest arrives in Densom wishing to spend the rest of the season with Hegnit. With no plan for a guest in mind beforehand, the Loremaster decides to roll randomly. Rolling a 67%, the Loremaster establishes that a Gerwa trader, having heard of Hegnit the Jackal, asks to spend time under her roof.

At this point, Hegnit must decide whether to accept the role of host or not. She has been eyeing the Craft Item action, and the idea of heading out next season without the item she wants is not appealing. However, neither is losing the Kleos and possibly the opportunity to trade with the Gerwa. Looking at her shekels, she decides to host the guest for the season. Spending 400 shekels, Hegnit opens her home to the trader. She decides to advance her Perform skill, stating that she and her guest spent the time trading stories. Additionally, the Gerwa trader shares the fact that he saw smoke rising out of a crack in the earth on his way north, and he thinks he heard a voice rumbling within the smoke. This is the rumour the Loremaster wanted to impart to the group. Finally, although the trader is not a patron, the Loremaster rules that Hegnit and her friends can purchase gear from him at a 10% discount at the start of the season because of her hospitality.

RETIREMENT

Eventually, each Jackal must make the decision to retire or continue to risk their life on the War Road. The rules for seasonal actions, Corruption, Kleos, scarring, and reputation are designed to provide reasons for a Jackal to leave the life of an adventurer and settle down. When they do so, the player receives a benefit for adding their character to the settlements of the Zaharets.

These benefits do not apply if the character dies during an adventure.

First, they transition from a PC to an NPC; however, the Loremaster should allow players to continue playing their character when new Jackals interact with them. Additionally, they can provide the Loremaster with one or two plot ideas their former character might hire Jackals to complete. This is usually the result of unfinished business from the Jackal's adventuring days.

Second, the player's new Jackal starts off with 20% of the retiring Jackal's total active advancements, rounded down, which represents the settlement attracting Jackals of some renown. Much like the rules for Kleos, if a player writes a song or epilogue commemorating their character's retirement, the Loremaster should feel free to reward them with between 1 and 3 additional advancements for their new character.

Finally, if the group is interested, dedicate a session to the character's retirement, remembering the great deeds they accomplished and sending them off in style.

CHAPTER 9

BESTIARY

Ba-en Nafar looked up at the waiting Jackals. The five of them looked as if they had been to Anu's realm and back. Burns and worse stained linen bandages, and the smell of acalana resin was heavy in the air. Broken bronze weapons hung at their sides, and the Kahar's arm was poorly splinted. His eyes narrowed as he looked at the dirty webbing that still clung to his countryman's belt.

"What happened to you?" the Gerwa captain of Sentem asked them. The large Trauj woman, Aldeshi-Halan, said nothing, but dropped a blood-stained sack at his feet. Ba-en opened it, finding it full of freshly severed Takan heads, and what seemed to be a newly hatched colony of red flies. With a heavy sigh, he began to count the heads and copper shekels.

Kalypsis is home to much more than just humanity. It is a world of haunting spirits, chaotic beasts, fantastical creatures, and dangerous foes. This chapter contains a sample bestiary of peoples and creatures that are common in the Zaharets.

To make running creatures and NPCs interesting and simple for the Loremaster, each monster stat block is as simple as possible. Instead of individual skills, creatures have group skill ratings. Any check the creature needs to make is made with the broader group rating. For example, if a Jackal targets a guard with a rite that requires them to make a Willpower check, instead of Willpower, the guard uses their Defence group rating of 50% for the check.

A creature's Knowledge group is also a representation of their intelligence and cunning. A creature with a Knowledge group of 40% or higher is of human intelligence. The greater the Knowledge group rating, the more intelligent the creature.

Additionally, all creatures have a combat range for rolling their attacks and their abilities are themed. This allows the Loremaster to produce flavourful combat without having to study the creature in depth beforehand. When rolling, the Loremaster can select an effect from the resulting range band or lower.

Often, a creature's range band has multiple attacks listed in the same line. This allows the Loremaster to either attack a single character multiple times (provoking them to spend of multiple Clash Points) or attack a number of characters up to the number of attacks. If the Loremaster selects an effect that states it has multiple attacks, they roll the first attack and, assuming it is successful, progresses to the second, and if that is successful, the third, and so on. Once an attack line is selected, the Loremaster rolls for each subsequent attack in the line. However, when a creature spends Clash Points to react to an attack, it can only make one attack, even if the combat range rolled would grant multiple attacks.

EXAMPLE OF A CREATURE IN COMBAT

Phillip, the Loremaster, is using a Nahunum in combat. The Nahunum have a Combat group rating of 120%! On the Nahunum's turn, Phillip rolls 65%. He can have the Nahunum perform a Stunning Strike, a Sweeping Arc, or a Glancing Blow. He selects Stunning Strike, so after resolving the first attack, he will make a second roll.

Later, the Nahunum successfully reacts against Trisha's Trauj, Zara, with a 54%. Even though Stunning Strike lists two attacks, on a reaction, the Nahunum hits only once.

The Loremaster can calculate the exact damage inflicted by creatures using die rolls, but they might also choose to simply use the creatures' average damage value. Using average damage can speed up combat, but it might mean that characters with higher Protection take no damage. If this is the case, the Loremaster should return to rolling dice.

Finally, the monsters have Wounds, Protection, Move, Initiative, and Clash Points, just like PCs. Creatures have fewer Clash Points than their heroic counterparts, because they will very often outnumber them. Creatures spend pooled Clash Points in the same way heroic characters do.

When starting a fight, add all of the same creature's Clash Points together to form a pool they can use when attacked. Remember to round down when calculating Clash Points. The creatures recover Clash Points like heroes do, at the start of their turn. If there are multiple creature types in a fight, keep their pools separate. Remove the appropriate number of Clash Points from the pool as creatures die.

EXAMPLE OF CREATURE CLASH POINT POOLS

Trisha has set up a combat with eight Norakan and three Mavakan. The Norakan have 0.5 Clash Points apiece, and the Mavakan have 2. So, Trish has a pool of 4 and a pool of 6 Clash Points, respectively, for each type of creature. When Becca's character slays the first Mavakan, the Mavakan pool drops from 6 to 4 Clash Points.

CREATURE SPECIAL ABILITIES

Creatures might also have special abilities, such as the Ankabar's *Opportunist*, the Takan's *Inured to Darkness*, or the Dead's *Chill of the Grave*. Each entry lists a creature's specific abilities, but many creatures benefit from the the following abilities:

Inured to Darkness: creatures with this special ability suffer no penalties due to absence of light.

Insubstanital: creatures with this type of armor are immune to talents and abilities that ignore Protection.

ENCOUNTER BUILDING

Building encounters in *Jackals* is simple. A creature's Clash Points provide a rough guideline for estimating how challenging they are. To design an encounter for Jackals:

1. Calculate the group's adjusted party size. This is equal to the total number of players in the group plus any adjustments from Kleos (see page 174).
2. The adjusted party size reveals the number of Clash Points' worth of creatures the Loremaster should use to build an encounter. Half of this number should make for an easy encounter, and 1.5 times this should make for a difficult one.
3. Consider forming a mixed group when designing an encounter. Although 16 Norakan can be fun, different creature abilities can work together to create more dynamic encounters.

This method should build a challenging encounter most of the time. There are a number of factors that can swing combat in the player's favour or against them. Some monsters are inherently more challenging than others. Yammim, Nehushta, and others are Chaos incarnate, so Jackals are always at a disadvantage in those fights. Die rolls can quickly turn against one side or the other. As the Loremaster, you should remember the following concepts during combat:

- Very few creatures in the world are willing to fight to the death. The **morale** rules (see page 63) simulate this fact for NPCs. Give both sides opportunities to run, avenues of escape, etc., and have NPCs use them. Players will not consider fleeing unless they see the option used in play.
- Players can spend **Fate Points** to save themselves from death. In the case of a total party kill, the group can still 'survive' by spending Fate Points. If this happens, the enemy leaves the Jackals (who spent a Fate Point) for dead or captures them, enabling them to fight another day.

ANIMALS

There are many beasts in the Zaharets that might threaten a group of adventurers. Jackals, wolves, and lions can all pose a threat in sufficient numbers.

JACKAL (ANIMAL)

The namesake of the Zaharets adventurer holds no special kinship with them. Packs of jackals roam the areas between towns and cities, their strangely human cries luring the unwary to their deaths.

JACKALS			
Type:	Animal	Location:	The Zaharets
Defence:	45%	Wounds:	18
Combat:	50%	Protection:	0
Knowledge:	20%	Move:	18
Urban:	50%	Initiative:	18
Common:	40%	Clash Points:	0.5
		Treasure Score:	0

Special Abilities
Nearly Human Voice: jackals mimic the voice of a human, sowing confusion. For a Clash Point, the jackal forces the target to make a hard Willpower check. If the target fails, the strange cry causes them to lose 2 Clash Points in confusion.

Combat Range	
1–10%	*Cowardly Nature:* the jackal pulls away from the fight, snapping and howling, but not engaging. If the jackal rolls Cowardly Nature twice consecutively, remove this jackal from the fight, as it runs away.
11–30%	*Snapping Bite:* the jackal leaps out to take a pound of flesh from its target. 1d8 + 1d6 (8) damage.
31–50%	*Frenzied Snap (2 attacks):* with surprising alacrity, the jackal darts forward, snapping as it moves. 1d8 + 1d6 (8) damage. If both attacks hit the same target, the jackal knocks the opponent prone.

LIONS

The southern plains of the War Road are home to the prides of the Gerwa lions. These majestic creatures claim the plains as their kingdom, and do not suffer other claimants.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">LIONS</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td>Animal</td><td>Location:</td><td>The Zaharets</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>50%</td><td>Wounds:</td><td>30</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>65%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>2 (natural)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>20%</td><td>Move:</td><td>16</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>30%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>40%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Roar:</i> the lion’s roar is powerful. For a Clash Point, the lion forces the target to make a hard Willpower check. If the target fails, they lose 15% from all skill checks for 1d4 rounds.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–25%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Rending Shake:</i> the lion bites down and shakes its target. 2d8 (9) damage. The target must spend an action or 3 Clash Points to make a difficult Athletics check to break free. If they do not, the lion automatically makes this attack on its next turn for free.</td></tr>
<tr><td>26–40%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Pouncing Rake (2 attacks on one target):</i> the lion leaps to rake its target with massive claws. 2d6 (7) damage each. If both claw attacks hit, the lion knocks their opponent prone.</td></tr>
<tr><td>41–65%</td><td colspan="3"><i>King of Beasts (3 attacks on one target):</i> all fear the lion due to its ability to quickly slay is prey. 2d8 (9) bite (1 attack) and 2d6 (7) claws (2 attacks). If both claw attacks hit, the lion knocks their opponent prone.</td></tr>
</table>

WOLVES (ANIMAL)

Wolf packs prowl the forests and mountains of the War Road. Although they stay away from the lights of the city, they often attack the farms around Sentem and Ameena Noani. The Takan often use wolf packs bound by lash and dark rites.

WOLVES

Type:	Animal	Location:	The Zaharets
Defence:	45%	Wounds:	20
Combat:	50%	Protection:	1 (natural)
Knowledge:	20%	Move:	18
Urban:	60%	Initiative:	18
Common:	30%	Clash Points:	0.5
		Treasure Score:	0

Special Abilities

Pack Tactics: when two wolves are attacking the same target, increase the cost for that target to react to attacks by 1 Clash Point.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Snap:* the wolf darts in and snaps at its target. 2d6 (7) damage. If this attack does damage, the wolf disengages from the target and can move away at half its Move.
16–35%	*Hamstring:* 1d8 + 1d4 (7) damage. The target must make an Endurance check or lose 2 Clash Points and half their Move until a successful Healing check.
36–50%	*Darting Maul (3 attacks):* 2d6 (7) bite (1) 1d8+1d4 (7) claws (2). The wolf can move up to one-quarter of its Move between each attack. If both claw attacks hit the same target, the wolf knocks their opponent prone.

THE DEAD

The cultures of the Zaharets acknowledge that the living have two intermixed natures, the corporeal flesh and some divine-breathed essence. Under the Laws of the world, when a creature dies, the flesh returns to the dust of the earth and the spark moves into the Silent Lands, where it belongs to the community of those who have died. However, Chaos is ever present, and it often circumvents this cycle by wilful malice or unforeseen chaotic eddies. When this occurs, either the flesh or the essence remains trapped in Kalypsis, twisted by Chaos. All the Dead share one common trait: they exude unnatural horror. Even the mightiest Jackal quickly loses their will to fight in the face of such foes.

Chill of Death: all of the Dead are unnatural, and their dread saps the vitality from those they fight. At the start of each round, opponents engaged with any Dead suffer Valour damage equal to the Dead's Chill of Death value.

ETEMMA

Etemma are spirits of the dead, who for many reasons are unable or unwilling to pass on to the Silent Lands. They remain bound to the world, usually to an item or location of personal significance.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">ETEMMA</th></tr>
<tr><th>Type:</th><th>Dead</th><th>Location:</th><th>The Zaharets</th></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Wounds:</td><td>40</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>65%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>3 (insubstantial)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>65%</td><td>Move:</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>45%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>30%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>50%</td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Corruption</td><td>8</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Chill of Death 4</i>
<i>Inured to Darkness</i>
<i>Flying:</i> Etemma can fly 18 yards per turn</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–10%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Chilling Touch:</i> the Etemma, although not corporeal, can sap the warmth of life from a target. 2d6 (7) damage.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11–25%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Howl of the Grave:</i> the Etemma gives voice to the chaotic turmoil possessing it. All targets within 10 yards suffer 1d8 + 2d4 (9) damage.</td></tr>
<tr><td>26–50%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Spectral Assault (2 attacks):</i> the Etemma lashes out, pulling spiritual essence from the flesh of its foes. 2d6 (7) damage for each attack.</td></tr>
<tr><td>51–65%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Breath and Fist (3 attacks):</i> with a howl of rage, the Etemma assaults all within range. 2d6 (7) damage with its touch (2) and 1d8 + 2d4 (9) to all enemies within 10 yards (1).</td></tr>
</table>

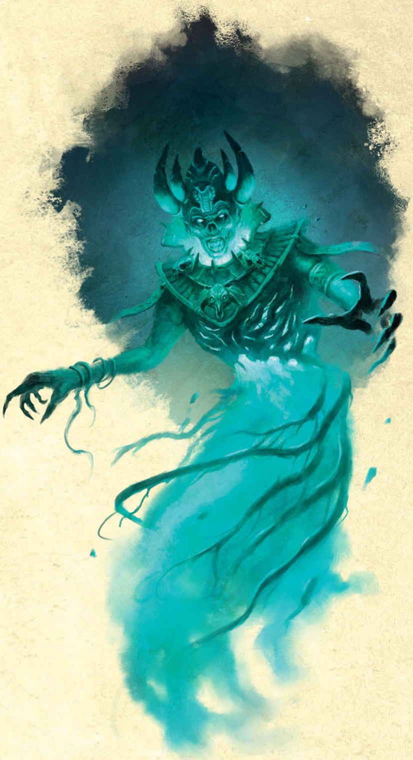
RAPIUMA

The Rapiuma are the opposite of the Etemma. Often, the spirit of a creature moves to the Silent Lands, but chaotic forces possess its body. In this case, the body continues to move about in imitation of life, bound to the forces that animate it.

RAPIUMA			
Type:	**Dead**	**Location:**	**The Zaharets**
		Wounds:	20
Defence:	35%	Protection:	2 (natural)
Combat:	55%	Move:	11
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	10%	Clash Points:	0.5
Common:	15%	Treasure Score:	1
		Corruption:	11

Special Abilities
Chill of Death 2
Inured to Darkness

Combat Range	
1–10%	*Boney Head-butt (2 attacks):* with jerky motions, the Rapiuma slams its skull into its target, for 2d6 (7) damage each.
11–30%	*Savage Rend:* the claw-like fingers of the Dead easily rend the flesh of the living. 1d8+1d6 (8) damage.
31–55%	*Claws of the Dead (2 attacks):* even the Dead can be incited to a murderous rage. 1d8+1d6 (8) damage each.



REPHAIM

Although the Hasheer count the Rephaim among the dead, they are a special case. They are the priests, kings, and queens of old. In ancient Ger, Keta, and other dark kingdoms, they bound their spirits to their corpses in death. As such, they are still in possession of their spirit and body, although both are irrevocably corrupt. The secrets of how to perform the binding ceremony are no longer known to the current inhabitants of the Zaharets, and as such, all of the existing Rephaim are centuries old. Each Rephaim is a unique being: the one below is but one example.

REPHAIM

Type:	Dead	Location:	The Zaherets
		Wounds:	120
Defence:	75%	Protection:	4 (insubstantial)
Combat:	90%	Move:	12
Knowledge:	95%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	70%	Clash Points:	5
Common:	80%	Treasure Score:	3
		Corruption:	18

Special Abilities

Chill of Death 6

Inured to Darkness

Chaotic Spirit: a Rephaim can take 1d6 damage to gain a Clash Point. Additionally, the Rephaim automatically senses the Corruption in all creatures within 20 yards. This makes it impossible for a corrupt creature to sneak up on a Rephaim.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Chaotic Wail:* the Rephaim gives voice to the chaotic turmoil that possesses it. All targets within 10 yards suffer 2d12 (13) damage.
16–30%	*Weapons of Ancient Kings (2 attacks):* the Rephaim's servants often buried their masters with the weapons they used in life. Their time as the Dead has honed their skills in combat. 4d6 (14) damage each.
31–45%	*Chaotic Lance:* the Rephaim were potent Mouathenics in life, and carried their dark knowledge with them into death. With this rite, the Rephaim invokes the dark energies of Chaos against its foe. 3d6 (10) damage. For each result of 5 or 6 rolled, the target suffers 1 Corruption. A successful Willpower check against the Rephaim's attack roll reduces the Corruption taken by half, or to 0 on a critical.
46–65%	*Summon Servants:* the Rephaim were never alone in their existence. They buried the bodies and spirits of their servants with them, binding them for all eternity. The Rephaim can spend 3 Clash Points to summon 2d6 Rapiuma or 6 Clash Points to summon 1d4 Etemma.
66–75%	*Speed of the Dead (4 attacks):* unconcerned with the limits of the human form, the Rephaim assaults its foe with a flurry of blows. 4d6 (14) damage each.
76–90%	*Command the Corrupt:* the Rephaim claims dominion over all those with Chaos in their souls. It forces the target to make a hard Willpower check. If failed, the Rephaim momentarily takes control of the corrupted creature for 1d4 rounds. The Rephaim can spend 3 Clash Points on the creature's turn to force it to take an action of the Rephaim's choice.

HUMANOIDS

The humanoid category of creatures covers the human cultures of the Zaharets, as well as the non-human, yet still human-like, creatures. Loremasters can find the Takan later in this chapter, as their inherent bestial and chaotic natures make them distant from humanity.

ANNUBI

The Annubian giants are found in Ger and along the southern end of the War Road. These creatures bear no resemblance to the Nahunum, save for their height. They are onyx-skinned, jackal-headed beings, many of which have been exiled from Ger. They roam the southern plains, using the arts they still retain from Anu to craft nearly invisible dwellings. They are artificers of great skill, and it is said they taught the first Hekas their knowledge.

ANNUBI			
Type:	Giant	Location:	Southern War Road
		Wounds:	60
Defence:	65%	Protection:	3 (1 natural + 2 leather)
Combat:	90%	Move:	18
Knowledge:	70%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	40%	Clash Points:	2
Common:	50%	Treasure Score:	3

Special Abilities
Crafter's Eye: Annubi ignore 4 Protection on all creatures due to their understanding of crafting and their strength. *Hekas:* the Annubi have inborn rites similar to the Hekas'. Whenever the Annubi can use a rite-like ability, the Loremaster can choose that effect, or one from the Hekas rite list.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*Snapping Jaws/Throwing Daggers:* the Annubi catches its target with only a bit of its strength. 4d6 (14) melee, 2d10 (11) ranged.
16–45%	*Dark Rite (2 attacks):* The Annubi uses this rite-like ability to attack its foes with a biting dust, catching up to two targets within 5 yards of each other. 3d8 (13) damage each.
46–75%	*Razored Khopesh/Javelins (2 attacks):* 2d8+2d6 (16) melee or 1d12 + 2d6 (13) ranged each. If both attacks hit the same target, the opponent loses 2 Protection for the fight, as the Annubi's blow severs some key strap or tie on the target's armour.
76–90%	*A Deadly Assault:* the Annubi invokes a rite-like ability. It targets up to three characters within 12 yards with specially prepared quills. 2d6 + 2d4 (12) damage (which ignores Protection). Each quill is imbued with a hallucinogenic toxin, which opens the targets' senses to the Silent Lands. 1d12 (6) Valour damage per round and –2 Clash Points for 1d6 rounds, as the characters' senses are assaulted with horrors. A successful hard Willpower check halves the damage, Clash Point loss, and duration of the poison.

ANU'S ADEPT

There are always those willing to kill for coin. Anu's Adept, however, kill for a cause. They are warrior priests in service of the Judge of the Underworld. They believe any they slay in Anu's name go directly to Anu's realm to be their servants until the Six awake.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">ANU'S ADEPT</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td>Humanoid</td><td>Location:</td><td>The Zaharets</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>50%</td><td>Wounds:</td><td>45</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>75%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>2 (leather)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>40%</td><td>Move:</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>75%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>40%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>2</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Inured to Darkness</i>
<i>Walks in Silence:</i> because of their lord's connection to the Silent Lands, Anu's Adepts can briefly step between Kalypsis and the underworld. For 2 Clash Points, an Adept can disappear for a round, parting the veil between this world and the next. When they return, they are infused with the essence of the Silent Lands. Their next attack is rolled at +20% to their skill and +1d8 Wounds.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–20%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Death's Caress:</i> the Adept makes a show of what they could do to their target. 2d12 (13) Valour damage from a blow that causes no Wounds, but instils fear in the target.</td></tr>
<tr><td>21–40%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Bleeding Strike:</i> the Adept delivers a shallow, but bleeding wound to their target. 1d10 + 1d6 (9). The target must make a difficult Endurance check or suffer 1d4 damage (which ignores Protection) at the start of their turn until they can bind their Wounds.</td></tr>
<tr><td>41–60%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Web of Anu (3 attacks):</i> the Adept weaves a net of bronze with their weapon, slicing their targets. 1d10 + 1d8 (11) each.</td></tr>
<tr><td>61–75%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Visage of Death:</i> the Adept calls upon their god to show his face. All non-Adept targets in front of the Adept must make a difficult Willpower check. If the check fails, the fear of Anu's Adept grips the target. They suffer 1d12 (6) Valour damage, –20% to all skills, and lose 1d8 (4) Clash Points at the start of each of their turns until they successfully make a Willpower check. Jackals make this check at the end of their turns.</td></tr>
<tr><td>76–90%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Anu's Blessing:</i> the Adept grants their target the blessing of their god, a dark gift that can send a spirit to the arms of Anu. 1d10 +1d6 (9). The target must make a hard Endurance check. If the check fails, the blow reduces the target to 1d8 Wounds. If the check succeeds, they instead suffer 1d12 (7) Wounds, which ignores Valour and Protection.</td></tr>
</table>

GUARDS

Throughout the Zaharets, you can find those trained or employed to protect others. Whether they are protecting nobles, cities, or caravans, these people work together to make sure their charges are safe.

GUARDS			
Type:	Human	Location:	Everywhere
Defence:	50%	Wounds:	30
Combat:	50%	Protection:	2 (leather)
Knowledge:	40%	Move:	16
Urban:	40%	Initiative:	15
Common:	45%	Clash Points:	0.5
		Treasure Score:	1

Special Abilities
Fight Together: guards are used to working as a group. When a guard attacks a target who is within melee range of another guard, they do +4 damage with their attacks and gain +2 Protection.

Combat Range	
1–10%	*Call for Aid:* the guard blows a horn, cries for help, or lights a signal beacon. In 1d4 rounds, 1d6 additional guards arrive. This action can only be taken once per combat.
11–25%	*Bash:* the guard attacks the target with the boss of their shield, or with the haft of their spear. 1d8 + 1d4 (7) damage and the target loses 1d4 Clash Points.
26–40%	*Spear Thrust (2 attacks):* the guard attacks the target with a series of rapid spear thrusts. 1d8 + 1d4 (7) each.
41–50%	*Incapacitate:* the guard attempts to incapacitate their target. This attack causes the target to lose 1d6 Clash Points for as long as the guard has them incapacitated. Should this reduce the target's Clash Points to 0, they are unable to take any action besides an Athletics or Unarmed Combat check to break free. While maintaining Incapacitate, the guard receives a +20% bonus to their Combat skill to maintain the hold. Additional guards can attempt to subdue the same target, each guard providing an additional –1d6 Clash Points and +20% to Combat skills.

MOUATHENIC

Mouathenics are dark ritualists who have become corrupted by the knowledge of the ancient east and the far north. They invoke their dark rites for their own personal gain and in service of fell spirits.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">MOUATHENIC</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td>Human</td><td>Location:</td><td>Everywhere</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Wounds:</td><td>60</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>55%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>2 (leather)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>60%</td><td>Move:</td><td>13</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>70%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>40%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>65%</td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>4</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Corrupt:</td><td>13</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Inured to Darkness</i>
<i>Dark Rites:</i> the Mouathenic has access to all the rites of the Mouathenics listed in this book. Whenever they are able to invoke a rite (see combat range), the Loremaster can choose to invoke a different rite from the one listed.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–10%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Dagger:</i> the Mouathenic lashes out with a poisoned dagger. 4d4 (10) damage. Additionally, the poison on the dagger causes 2d6 (7) Wounds. The target can make a difficult Endurance check to reduce the damage by half.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11–30%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Invoke Darkness:</i> the Mouathenic douses all the light in the area, plunging it into a supernatural darkness. Targets that are unable to see in the dark spend 2 additional Clash Points for actions and reactions. The Mouathenic gains +20% to all Combat and Defensive targets that are unable to see, and counts as having a positive trait for all attacks and defences.</td></tr>
<tr><td>31–45%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Chaotic Lance:</i> with this rite, the Mouathenic invokes dark energies against their foe. 3d8 damage (13). For each result of 7 or 8 rolled, the target suffers 1 Corruption. A difficult Willpower check reduces the Corruption taken by half, or to 0 on a critical. Double the Corruption on a fumble.</td></tr>
<tr><td>46–60%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Draining Thrust:</i> through dark invocations, the Mouathenic is able to steal the essence of those they wound. 2d12 + 2d6 (20) damage. Additionally, the Mouathenic heals for half the damage it inflicted. If the Mouathenic absorbs healing damage that would take them above their maximum Wounds, it stops at 60 Valour and they can immediately invoke any rite they know for free.</td></tr>
</table>

NAHUNUM

The Nahunum are the primary type of giant found in the mountains of the Zaharets. Standing nearly 8 cubits (12 feet) tall, they usually remove themselves from the affairs of the smaller folk. They are ancient, wise in stone craft, and often curious about the Nahrackim, the 'low dwellers' in their tongue. However, when roused to anger, they are a terrible foe, capable of breaking Jackals, their weapons, and their armour.

NAHUNUM

Type:	Giant	Location:	A'hule Asa
Defence:	55%	Wounds:	75
Combat:	120%	Protection:	4 (2 natural + 2 leather)
Knowledge:	60%	Move:	20
Urban:	30%	Initiative:	12
Common:	70%	Clash Points:	2
		Treasure Score:	3

Special Abilities

Strength of Old: Nahunum ignore 3 Protection on all creatures due to their strength.

Stone and Sea: the Nahunum remember the Hulathi of old and their ancient alliance with them. As such, they hesitate to attack those who bear knowledge or weapons of their old allies, at least until they gain more information.

Skill of Old: Nahunum possess a combat skill of 120%. The Loremaster can select a talent for the creature before combat to represent how this creature fights uniquely.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Glancing Blow:* the Nahunum catches its target with only a bit of its strength. 3d10 (16) melee, 2d8 + 2d6 (16) ranged.
16–40%	*Sweeping Arc:* the Nahunum makes a wide attack, catching up to two targets within 5 yards in its swing. 3d10 (16) melee, 2d8 + 2d6 (16) ranged.
41–70%	*Stunning Strike (2 attacks):* 2d10 (11) melee, 2d10 (11) ranged. If both attacks hit the same target, the opponent loses all Clash Points for 1d4 rounds, or half that number with a successful Endurance check.
71–90%	*Got You:* the Nahunum hits its target with such force that it knocks the target 20 yards away. 3d8 (13) melee or ranged damage. If the target strikes a wall or other object, the object and the target take 4d6 (14) damage. The Nahunum knocks its target prone, and the target loses all remaining Clash Points. A successful hard Athletics check negates both effects.

WOLVES (BANDITS)

The term ‘Wolves’ applies to bandits who raid the human settlements and caravans along the War Road. Much like Jackals in many ways, Wolves serve only themselves, with no concern for the well-being of the Law of Alwain or the settlements they harm.

WOLVES

Type:	Human	Location:	Everywhere
		Wounds:	36
Defence:	50%	Protection:	3 (leather + shield)
Combat:	65%	Move:	12
Knowledge:	40%	Initiative:	18
Urban:	50%	Clash Points:	1
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	3
		Corruption:	4

Special Abilities

Dirty Tricks: when two or more Wolves are engaged with the same target, they can spend a Clash Point to ignore 2 Protection after rolling an attack.

Combat Range

1–10%	*Retreat:* the Wolf breaks from combat and retreats a full Move, while firing their bow at their target. 1d10 (5) damage. If the Wolf rolls two consecutive Retreats, they flee from the fight.
11–25%	*Savage Blow:* the Wolf attacks the nearest target with either its sword or its bow. 1d10 + 1d6 (9) melee, 1d10 (5) ranged.
26–50%	*Bolstering Strikes (2 attacks):* the Wolf attacks the nearest target twice with either its sword or its bow. 1d10 + 1d6 (9) melee, 1d10 (5) ranged. Should the Wolf inflict 5 or more points of damage (after Protection), they heal 5 Wounds.
51–65%	*Bring Them Down (2 attacks):* the Wolf attacks the nearest target twice with either its sword or its bow. 1d10 + 1d6 (9) melee, 1d10 (5) ranged. Additionally, the Wolf can make this attack by spending 1 Clash Point per Wolf engaged with the target.

MONSTROUS CREATURES

ABURRISANU

The Aburrisanu are centipedes, grown to gigantic size due to their proximity to dark artefacts.

ABURRISANU			
Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Under the Mountains
		Wounds:	24
Defence:	65%	Protection:	2 (natural)
Combat:	50%	Move:	15
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	65%	Clash Points:	1
Common:	60%	Treasure Score:	0
		Corruption:	6

Special Abilities
Opportunist: the Aburrisanu gets +20% to attack its skill against characters who are suffering penalties to their Move. *Movement of Earth:* Aburrisanu can crawl on walls and ceilings, ignoring any penalties to Move.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*What Big Mandibles You Have (2 attacks):* the Aburrisanu bites at one target. 1d8 + 1d4 (7) damage each.
16–35%	*Poison Claws:* the Aburrisanu uses its toxicognaths to pierce a target. 2d6 (7) damage. Additionally, the Aburrisanu poisons the target. They reduce the target's Move by 50% and their Clash Points by 2, and the target must make an Endurance check. On a success, they can shake off the effects in 2 rounds. On a failure, the venom's effects last for 4 rounds.
36–50%	*Trample:* the Aburrisanu tramples up to three characters within 15 yards of each other. 3d8 (13) damage, as the Aburrisanu knocks the Jackals to the ground, and they lose 2 Clash Points each. A Dodge check allows a target to jump out of the way. An opposed Melee Combat check allows a Jackal to damage the creature, but the Aburrisanu still tramples the Jackal.
51–70%	*Burrow and Drag:* the Aburrisanu burrows into the earth. The Aburrisanu can drag along any target in the line of its burrow, including those above the tunnel. It will carry the targets 10 yards and inflict 2d12 (13) damage to each. The Aburrisanu can travel another 20 yards without the targets and reappear to harry them within 20 yards of the beginning of the burrow.

ANKABAR

The Ankabar, or crypt spider, is an arachnid about the same size as a large dog. They build their nests in dark, dry locations. They are not web-spinning hunters, but trapdoor spiders, creating concealed pitfalls in their nests to capture the unwary and leave them as easy prey.

ANKABAR

Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Desert Warrens
Defence:	65%	Wounds:	20
Combat:	50%	Protection:	0
Knowledge:	10%	Move:	15
Urban:	65%	Initiative:	18
Common:	60%	Clash Points:	0.5
		Treasure Score:	1

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Opportunist: the Ankabar gets +20% to its attack skill against characters who are suffering penalties to their Move.

Trapped!: on a critical hit (or a fumble by an attacker), the Ankabar forces its victim to step into a camouflaged hole. Roll a d4:

> *1 – Ankle Breaker:* make an Endurance check. On a success, the character suffers 1d8 Valour (which ignores Protection). On a failure, they suffer an additional 1d6 Wounds and an equivalent loss of Move until the Jackal heals those Wounds.
>
> *2–3 – Stuck:* the thick webs bind the character, reducing their Move to 0 and their Clash Points by 2. A hard Athletics check or 10 points of slashing damage frees the character.
>
> *4 – Swallowed:* the character falls through a hole large enough to drop them 30 feet into the warren of the spider. They suffer the damage from 'Ankle Breaker' above and are Stuck. Additionally, the character's thrashing summons 1d4 + 1 more Ankabar.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Skitter:* the Ankabar disappears into the shadows, perhaps slipping into a camouflaged hole. The spider will reappear on the map within 20 yards on its next turn and gain +20% to its attack skill.
16–30%	*Paralysing Venom:* the Ankabar makes an attack against the target, dealing 1d6 + 2d4 (8). Additionally, the bite poisons the Jackal. The venom reduces their Move by 50%, they lose 2 Clash Points, and must make a difficult Endurance check. On a success, the Jackal shakes off the effects in 2 rounds. On a failure, the venom's effects last for 4 rounds.
31–50%	*Mandibles (2 attacks):* the Ankabar makes two quick bites against their target, dealing 1d6 + 2d4 (8) each.
51–70%	*Web:* the Ankabar snags its victim with its webbing. It immediately begins to bind the impaired character. The character loses 2 additional Clash Points and has their Move reduced to 0. The Ankabar can always choose to poison the character in this state. In a single round, the Ankabar can immobilize the Jackal's arms, and in two rounds, the Ankabar completely envelopes the hapless Jackal in the webbing and drags them away into the maze. A character not found within an hour is likely to be dead. The webbing has 10 Wounds. Unless an ally attempts to pull their blow (make attacks at half skill), the Jackal within the web suffers equal damage to the webbing as their 'allies' hack them free.

ANZAIM

The Anzaim are chimerical creatures found in the Luasa Desert. They possess the body of a lion; the wings, feathers, and rear claws of a bird of prey; horns like a bull; and the face, intellect, and hands of a human. The Anzaim feature prominently into the myths and iconography of the Trauj, who see them as lesser deities who bring the rain and guide the clans.

ANZAIM

Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Luasa Desert
Defence:	85%	Wounds:	135
Combat:	140%	Protection:	3 (natural)
Knowledge:	70%	Move:	20
Urban:	65%	Initiative:	15
Common:	90%	Clash Points:	5
		Treasure Score:	4

Special Abilities

Flying: Anzaim can fly 18 yards per turn

Divine Skill: an Anzaim possesses a combat skill of 140%. A Loremaster can select three talents for the creature before combat to represent how this creature fights uniquely.

Stormbringer: by choice or when provoked by rage, the Anzaim can bring about thunderous rains. Storm clouds blossom from nowhere, and the dark thunderheads release their rains. When this is in effect, all Jackals suffer –30% to Ranged Combat and Perception (due to wind and rain). Additionally, the storm covers a 5-mile radius, which, while providing rain, can also cause flash floods.

Awe Inspiring: the Anzaim are creatures of a different order than that of humanity. When encountering an Anzaim, each character must make a hard Willpower check. Those that fail are unable to take aggressive actions against it, unless first attacked, choosing instead to flee for their lives. In combat, those who failed their check suffer –30% to combat skills and –3 Clash Points for 2 rounds, until they realize they can wound the Anzaim.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Charge:* the Anzaim are messengers of the storm. They can charge their bodies with the power of thunder, increasing the damage they do by 1d6, or causing 1d6 damage to those who strike them in melee combat. This effect is cumulative. The thunder damage ignores Protection.
16–25%	*Wing Buffet (2 attacks):* the Anzaim throws back its opponents with a mighty unfurling of its wings. A gust of wind accompanies this action, buffeting the targets. 2d8 + 2d6 (16) damage each. The target must make a hard Endurance or Athletics check, or the Anzaim throws them 10 yards away.
26–40%	*Slam and Tear:* the Anzaim tears at the face of its target with its teeth and slams its horns into the targets head. 2d10 + 2d12 (24) damage.
41–70%	*Storm Voice:* the Anzaim roars with a voice like thunder, stunning its foes and rending their flesh. This attack targets all enemies in front of the Anzaim out to 15 yards. Targets must make a hard Endurance and Willpower check. A failed Endurance check means the target takes 4d10 (22) damage. A failed Willpower check means the target loses 2d4 Clash Points for an equal number of rounds. A successful save reduces the effects by half.
71–90%	*Toss:* the Anzaim grabs its target and throws them 20 yards. 4d8 (18) damage, and the target is knocked prone (requiring 3 Clash Points to stand). A successful Athletics check prevents the target from becoming prone.

GIANT SCORPION

Similar to the Aburrisanu, this scorpion is a monstrous version of its species.

GIANT SCORPION			
Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Corrupt Desert Locations
		Wounds:	30
Defence:	65%	Protection:	3 (natural)
Combat:	65%	Move:	18
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	30%	Clash Points:	1
Common:	30%	Treasure Score:	0
		Corruption:	8
Special Abilities			
None			
Combat Range			
1–35%	*Trample:* the scorpion tramples up to three characters within 15 yards of each other. 2d6 damage as the giant scorpion knocks the Jackals to the ground, and they lose 2 Clash Points. A Dodge check allows a target to jump out of the way. An opposed Melee Combat check allows a Jackal to damage the scorpion, but the scorpion still tramples the character.		
36–50%	*Stinger in the Back:* the giant scorpion uses its stinger to pierce its target. 1d6 + 2d4 (8) damage. Additionally, the scorpion poisons the Jackal. Their Move is reduced by 50%, they lose 1d4 + 1 Clash Points, and they must make an Endurance check. On a success, they are able to shake off the effects in 2 rounds. On a failure, the venom's effects last for 4 rounds		
51–65%	*Claws in the Front (2 attacks):* the scorpion snaps at targets in front of it. 2d6 (7) damage each.		

NEHUSHTA

Nehushta are creatures distantly related to the dragons of Kalypsis. They appear as bronze-scaled serpents with wings and a poisoned tail. Contained within their flesh is a furnace, which boils their blood and keeps the Nehushta in a state of constant rage.

NEHUSHTA			
Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Vori Wastes or Luasa Desert
		Wounds:	75
Defence:	55%	Protection:	4 (natural)
Combat:	95%	Move:	10
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	75% (Stealth only)	Clash Points:	6
Common:	40%	Treasure Score:	3
		Corruption	8

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Flying: Nehusta can fly 30 yards per turn

Boiling Blood: the Nehushta is a creature manifested from the heat of the Luasa sands. In a round where it takes Wounds, it sprays boiling blood at everyone within 3 yards. Those within the zone must make a difficult Dodge check with the following implications:

Critical – 0 damage

Success – 1d6 damage (ignores Protection)

Failure – 2d6 damage (ignores Protection)

Fumble – 3d6 damage (ignores Protection) + 1d4 damage to the character's armour (applied to its Protection)

Combat Range	
1–30%	*Swooping Drop:* 7d8 (31) damage; ignores Protection. It costs 3 Clash Points to react to this attack.
31–45%	*Darting Bite (2 attacks):* 4d8 (18) damage each.
46–70%	*Scrambling Claws (2 attacks):* 3d10 (16) damage each.
71–90%	*Poison Stinger:* 5d8 (22) damage. Additionally, the target must make a hard Endurance check: critical, 0 damage; success, 1d4 Wounds; failure, 2d4 Wounds; fumble, 3d4 Wounds. Finally, whether the first attack is successful or not, the Nehushta can make an additional attack, counting any result of 71–90% as a Scrambling Claws attack.

NYSSALIS

The Nyssalis is a terror out of Melkoni legend: a multi-headed Chaos beast that grows new heads whenever a Jackal cuts one off. According to Melkoni tales, only those blessed by the gods should attempt to slay one. Nyssalis are sent down to earth by the gods to punish a town that betrays the hospitality rites, or to punish a ruler whose hubris has grown too great for the heavens to ignore.

NYSSALIS

Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Vori Wastes and Area Around Kroryla
		Wounds:	175
Defence:	65%	Protection:	5 (natural)
Combat:	80%	Move:	9
Knowledge:	30%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	30%	Clash Points:	5
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	3
		Corruption:	10

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Inured to Poison: the Nyssalis is the most venomous creature in the Zaharets. It is immune to all poisons and venoms.

Reaching Necks: the Nyssalis can target enemies up to 5 yards away.

Lose One Head: the Nyssalis begins the fight with four heads. Each time the Nyssalis loses 25 Wounds, it regains 15 Wounds and grows a new head. With each new head, it gains 2 Clash Points, and its Combat skill goes up by 15%. Once the Nyssalis' skill goes above 100%, the Loremaster gives it a talent. The Nyssalis can gain up to six new heads. Jackals can spend 2 Clash Points to burn the stump of a freshly severed head with a lit torch to prevent the Nyssalis from gaining a new head, the Wounds, and the Combat skill increase.

Combat Range

1–25%	*Ponderous Trample:* the Nyssalis charges its target, attempting to crush it under its massive bulk. This attack can target up to three characters in a straight line. A Jackal can spend a Clash Point to make an opposed Dodge check to allow them to jump out of the way. A successful check means the Jackal takes no damage. A Jackal can alternatively spend a Clash Point to make an unopposed Melee Combat check, which allows the Jackal to damage the Nyssalis, but the creature still tramples the Jackal. 5d10 (27) damage.
26–45%	*Claws Like Iron (2 attacks):* 2d6 + 2d10 (18) each.
46–65%	*Bludgeoning Head-butts (1+ attacks):* the Nyssalis batters its foe with its spiked heads. 3d8 + 3d4 (21) damage. The Nyssalis can spend Clash Points on a one-for-one basis to make additional attacks, up to a number of attacks equal to the number of its heads.
66–80%	*Venomous Maws (1+ attacks):* the bite of a Nyssalis contains the most potent venom in the known world. 2d12 (13) damage. If the target suffers damage, they must make an extreme Endurance check. On a failed check, the target suffers 3d12 (19) damage and loses 2d4 Clash Points, due to the pain of the poison, for 1d4 rounds. On a success, the damage, Clash Points, and duration are reduced by half. The Nyssalis can spend Clash Points on a one-for-one basis to make additional attacks, up to a number of attacks equal to the number of its heads.

UKUKU

The Gerwa horned owl is a creature of Anu, the lord of the dead. These grey birds bear the souls of dead Gerwa to the afterlife, where Anu judges them. However, the scrolls of Anu say that the god lets his pets roam the world, spreading the despair of the Silent Lands wherever they roam.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">UKUKU</th></tr>
<tr><th>Type:</th><th>Monstrous Creature</th><th>Location:</th><th>Ger</th></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>75%</td><td>Wounds:</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>50%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>2 (insubstantial)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>45%</td><td>Move:</td><td>20</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>60%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>18</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>40%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Inured to Darkness</i>
<i>Flying:</i> Ukuku fly 20 yards per turn.
<i>Despair:</i> to look on the visage of the Ukuku is to despair of life. They are creatures of the Silent Lands. Each round of combat, they leach Valour from those within 5 yards, dealing 1d6 Valour (which ignores Protection). This Valour damage heals the Ukuku’s wounds.
<i>Feathers of the Ukuku:</i> the essence of the Silent Lands saturates the feathers of the owls of the dead. Hekas or others can use these feathers to brew a deadly poison, or a potion that causes the victim to sink into a despondent malaise.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–15%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Cry of Despair:</i> all enemy targets within 15 yards must make a difficult Willpower check. Those who fail suffer 2d6 (7) Valour damage, as they hear a cry that heralds the journey to the underworld.</td></tr>
<tr><td>16–30%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Raking Shroud:</i> the Ukuku swoops past the target, raking it with its claws. 2d8 (9) (ignores Protection).</td></tr>
<tr><td>31–40%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Horns of the Dead:</i> the Ukuku rams into its target, its spiked horns piecing armour and flesh alike. 2d6 (7) damage (ignores Protection).</td></tr>
<tr><td>40–50%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Blinding Peck:</i> the Ukuku attempts to steal the eyes of its target. The target takes 2d8 (9) wounds and must make a hard Endurance check. If the check fails, the Ukuku blinds the target. (Blind: The target must spend 3 additional Clash Points to do anything. This means they must spend 3 on their turn just to take their normal action.) Additionally, if the Loremaster is using the scarring rules, this character takes a +5 to the roll after the combat, and applies any scars to the eye or face. The blind condition can be removed with a successful difficult Heal check by another Jackals.</td></tr>
</table>

UMBALNANI

The Umbalnani are the monkey spirits that serve the protector of the Ligna Hualla. They are normally mischievous and inquisitive creatures, yet recently they have become hostile to humanity for unknown reasons.

UMBALNANI			
Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Ligna Hualla
Defence:	75%	Wounds:	20
Combat:	45%	Protection:	4 (insubstantial)
Knowledge:	35%	Move:	20
Urban:	50%	Initiative:	18
Common:	40%	Clash Points:	0.5
		Treasure Score:	1

Special Abilities
Too Fast to Track: the Umbalnani are freakishly fast. Reacting to them is far more difficult than usual. The Clash Point cost to react to an Umbalnani is increased by 1. *Trickster:* the Umbalnani gains +15% to its attack rolls and + 1d6 damage against blinded, immobilised, or unaware targets.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*Into the Trees:* the Umbalnani disappears into the trees. The monkey reappears on the map within 20 yards on its next turn, and attacks its unaware target.
16–30%	*What Is That?:* the Umbalnani flings some of its spiritual essence at its target's face to blind it. If it hits, the target must make a Willpower check to resist the attack. If it fails, the Umbalnani blinds its target. (Blind: The target must spend 3 additional Clash Points to do anything. This means they must spend 3 on their turn just to take their normal action.)
31–45%	*It's On Your Face (2 attacks):* the Umbalnani leaps out onto its target, a flurry of grasping fingers and bites. 2d6 (7) damage each (ignoring Protection).

YAMMIM

The Hasheers disagree on the origins of Yammim. Some say these great multi-headed serpents are actually the spawn of Tracal, the mythical sea serpent that arose at the dawn of time to threaten creation. Others believe they are stars that became enamoured of Kalypsis and were trapped in the material of creation. Whatever the case, the Yammim of Kalypsis are thankfully few in number. These creatures are known for their great wings, multiple heads, and fearsome horns. Some live in the A'hule Asa and deep in the Vori Wastes. They represent Chaos incarnate – the desire to destroy the works of man.

YAMMIM			
Type:	Magical Creature	Location:	The Wilds
		Wounds:	250
Defence:	90%	Protection:	7
Combat:	150%	Move:	18
Knowledge:	80%	Initiative:	18
Urban:	50%	Clash Points:	8
Common:	80%	Treasure Score:	5
		Corruption:	15
Special Abilities			
Inured to Darkness *Flying:* Yammim can fly 45 yards per turn. *Wild Skill:* a Yammim possesses a combat skill of 150%. A Loremaster can select three talents for the dragon before combat to represent how this creature fights uniquely. *Blood and Bone:* the legends say, in more than one tale, that the Tracal's body was used to shore up and order creation. Yammim are no different. Jackals can use the scales and other body parts scavenged from a Yammim to create wondrous items. *Many-Headed Beast:* a Yammim has between two and seven heads (1d4+1d3).			
Combat Range			
1–25%	*Teeth Like Spears, A Gullet Like a Pit:* the Yammim snaps at its target and attempts to swallow them. The bite does 8d8 (36) damage and forces the target to make a hard Athletics check. If it fails, the Yammim swallows the target. The target takes 3d10 (16) damage, which ignores Protection, at the start of each of its turn for 2d4 rounds. At the end of this time, the Yammim vomits them up, inflicting an additional 2d6 (7) Wounds.		
26–50%	*Too Many Heads (1+ attacks):* the Yammim lashes out with its mighty heads, snapping at everyone around it. Each head does 3d12 + 3d4 (27) damage. The Yammim can spend Clash Points on a one-for-one basis to make additional attacks, up to a number of attacks equal to the number of its heads.		
51–70%	*Horns Like Iron Rams (1+ attacks):* the Yammim brings the thick horns of its heads to bear, slamming them down upon its targets. Each head does 6d8 (27) damage. Additionally, each result of 7 or 8 on the dice reduces a target's shield or hard armour by 1 Protection. The Yammim can spend Clash Points on a one-for-one basis to make additional attacks, up to a number of attacks equal to the number of its heads.		
71–90%	*Breath of the Grave:* A miasma of Chaos fills the Yammim's innards. It can belch and spew that roiling Chaos out onto its foes. 4d8 (18) damage to 1d6 targets, which ignores Protection. Additionally, each result of 7s or 8s on the dice inflicts 1 point of Corruption on their targets. A successful extreme Willpower check reduces the Corruption by half, or to 0 on a critical. Double the Corruption on a fumble. The Yammim vomits up any previously consumed creature or Jackal when performing this attack.		

RATHIC

The cultures of the Zaharets acknowledge the reality of a supernatural existence beyond what they can see. Just as they inhabit this part of creation, humanity knows there are creatures that inhabit the supernatural realm. The Luathi term for this kind of being is a ‘Rathic’.

ALUQA

Aluqa are immortal spirits of hunger. They are a kind of Rathic (incorporeal spirit) that haunts the dark places of the world, feeding off the blood of their victims while they trap them in a nightmarish sleep. To the outside observer, their victims appear to sweat blood. One can only drive an Aluqa away with rites of Law, or by forcing it into the physical realm (with Hekas rites) and battling with it.

ALUQA			
Type:	Spirit	Location:	Everywhere
		Wounds:	45
Defence:	75%	Protection:	4 (insubstantial)
Combat:	75%	Move:	18
Knowledge:	60%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	70%	Clash Points:	4
Common:	70%	Treasure Score:	0
		Corruption	7

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Drain Blood: the Aluqa feeds off the blood of the living. At the start of the Aluqa’s turn, all living creatures within 15 yards of the Aluqa suffer 1d10 (5) Wounds (ignore Protection and Vitality) each round. They can spend 2 Clash Points to make a difficult Willpower check to reduce this damage by half. The Aluqa heals for an amount equal to the damage it inflicts, and can exceed its starting Wounds. The Aluqa can exclude any target within range for free.

Rathic: the Aluqa is an insubstantial being, and as such enjoys a high level of Protection from normal weapons. Additionally, Jackals cannot simply slay a Rathic. When its Wounds reach 0, it flees, driven away by the battle. Slaying a Rathic permanently requires a ritual, and is a feat of legend.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*A Focused Draining:* the Aluqa creates a special connection with its target. This increases the damage done by the Drain Blood special ability to 2d10 (11), and forces the Jackal to make a hard Willpower check for 3 Clash Points.
16–45%	*Horrific Intrusion (2 attacks):* although the Aluqa is insubstantial, its presence is inclement to humans. The Aluqa darts back and forth through its target, its chaotic nature rending the target’s essence. 1d12 (6) Wounds (which ignore Protection and Vitality) each.
46–75%	*Wrathful Letting:* the Aluqa focuses to draw even more blood from its targets. The targets suffer 2d6 (7) Wounds (which ignore Protection and Vitality) from the letting, as blood gushes from their pores. They can spend 2 Clash Points to make a difficult Willpower check for half damage. Note: This attack is in addition to the Aluqa’s Drain Blood special ability.

BA

Ba is the Gerwan term for the spirits in service of their gods, both the Six and the Eight. Sometimes, the priestesses and priests of those gods plead with the Ba for aid; at other times, they can be encountered in old Gerwa sites, bound in ancient service to a priest, god, or Hekas.

BA			
Type:	Spirit	Location:	Everywhere
		Wounds:	20
Defence:	50%	Protection:	3 (insubstantial)
Combat:	60%	Move:	18
Knowledge:	60%	Initiative:	18
Urban:	40%	Clash Points:	1
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	0
		Corruption	3

Special Abilities
Inured to Darkness
Not Flesh: all of the Ba's attacks ignore Protection, as they pass through armour and flesh with ease.
Rathic: the Ba is an insubstantial being, and as such enjoys a high level of Protection from normal weapons. Additionally, Jackals cannot simply slay a Rathic. When its Wounds reach 0, it flees, driven away by the battle. Slaying a Rathic permanently requires a ritual, and is a feat of legend.

Combat Range	
1–10%	*Spiritual Force:* the Ba pauses in its attack and draws in more energy from its patron. It either heals for 1d8, or if at maximum Wounds, deals an extra d8 on its next attack.
11–40%	*Blades of Ethereal Light (2 attacks):* the Ba uses weapons forged from its own essence. They pierce the bodies of its foes, bringing them one step closer to the Silent Lands. 2d8 (9) melee or 1d12 (6) ranged. These attacks ignore Protection.
41–60%	*Spirits of Retribution (3 attacks):* Ba are known to hunt down apostates and slay them for the temple. Facing an enraged Ba often causes pity for those apostates. 2d8 (9) melee or 1d12 (6) ranged. These attacks ignore Protection.

TAKAN

These beasts of Chaos dominated the War Road for nearly half a century. All four cultures fear and hate these beasts, who constantly work to supplant the works of humanity. Presented here are the seven most common types of Takan found in the Zaharets.

ATAKAN

All know that the Takan possess a rapacious desire, but the Atakan's lust for flesh is legendary. The Atakan stand nearly as tall as the giants, and are strong enough to rip a horse apart. Jackals frequently find them among the other Takan, who use them as enforcers. They possess huge, distorted mouths filled with rows of teeth. If that was not horrifying enough, the Atakan's jaws can unhinge, and their hands end in stout, canine-like claws. A thick pelt covers their massive frames, which serves as their armour.

ATAKAN

Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
		Wounds:	75
Defence:	75%	Protection:	4 (natural)
Combat:	90%	Move:	20
Knowledge:	60%	Initiative:	18
Urban:	60%	Clash Points:	4
Common:	40%	Treasure Score:	1
		Corruption	10

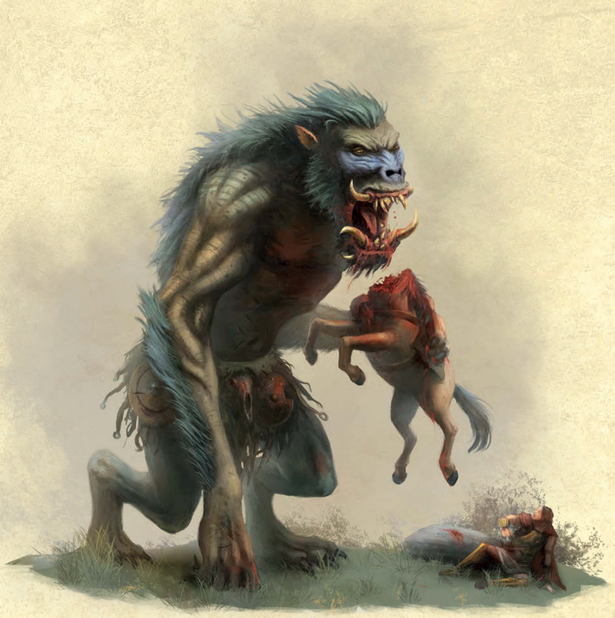
Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

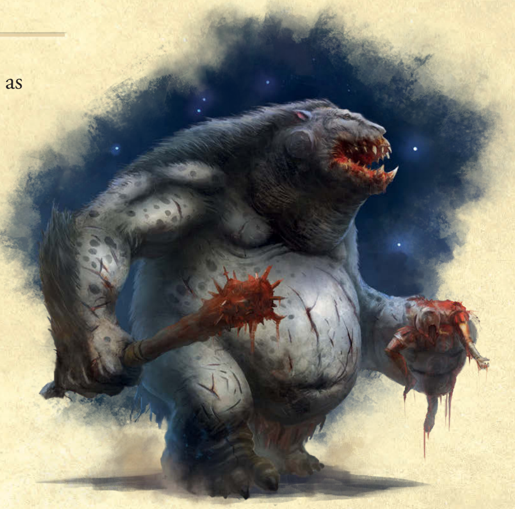
Crimson Maw: the Atakan is always taking bites and snaps at those around it. This rending is accounted for in the extra 1d8 on all attacks below. The taste of that blood riles them into a frenzy. The Atakan heals for an amount equal to the damage it inflicts with the 1d8 roll, and can exceed its starting Wounds.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Dismissive Backhand:* the Atakan delivers a stunning backhand to its target. 2d8 (9) damage and the target loses 2 Clash Points immediately.
16–35%	*Just a Taste:* the Atakan unhinges its jaw and takes a chunk out of its target. 1d10 + 1d8 (10) Wounds.
36–55%	*Rip You Apart! (2 attacks):* the Atakan attempts to rend its target in two with massive blows. 2d10 + 1d8 (16) damage each.
56–80%	*Dislocating Grab:* the Atakan grabs its target, pulling limbs from sockets while they hold them. 4d8 (18) damage, and –6 Clash Points, and may not take actions, save for Unarmed Combat or Athletics checks.) The target must spend an action to make an opposed Unarmed Combat or Athletics roll against the Atakan's Combat skill to break free. While grabbed, the target may not spend Clash Points to react to attacks, and the Atakan gains +15% to its Combat skill.
81–90%	*Seklah!:* the Atakan attempts to consume their target in a ravenous expression of hunger and violence. 3d12 + 1d8 (24) damage.



GADAKAN



Other Takan view the Gadakan as creatures of burden and labour. Hatered is the only spark that kindles their dim minds, and they thrive in the wild. Through some twist of Chaos, the Gadakan possess thick grey skin, which hangs in rolls, like an elephant, and they tower over the rest of the Takan, even the Atakan. Most disturbing of all are the Gadakan's strong regenerative abilities, which have caused dismay to many a caravan guard and Jackal.

GADAKAN

Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
		Wounds:	75
Defence:	80%	Protection:	8 (natural)
Combat:	60%	Move:	8
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	15%	Clash Points:	2
Common:	20%	Treasure Score:	1
		Corruption	10

Special Abilities

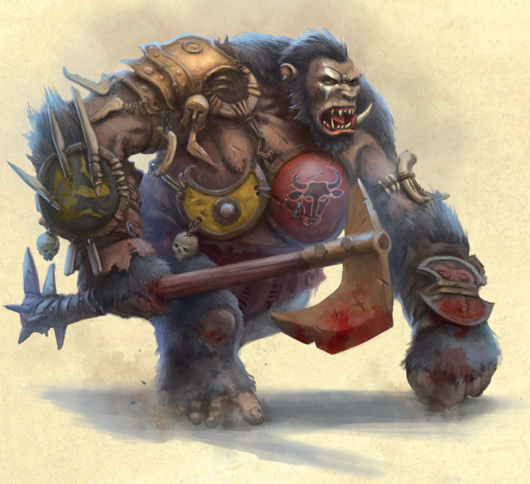
Inured to Darkness

Dark Regeneration: at the start of each round, the Gadakan regains 3d6 Wounds. This applies even if they were below 0 Wounds on the previous round. If they regain enough Wounds to give them at least 1 Wound, they stand up and act normally. They are not able to regenerate under the light of the sun, or under any pure light such as the light the Kahar generates. Additionally, the Gadakan cannot regenerate wounds inflicted by fire.

Combat Range

1–5%	*Too Dumb to Move:* the Gadakan grows confused and sits down, glaring at those around it.
6–15%	*Thrash:* the Gadakan lashes out with a meaty fist to hammer against one of its foes. 3d10 (16) damage.
16–35%	*Trample:* the Gadakan lowers its head and ploughs ahead for 10 yards. While moving in roughly a straight line, it runs roughshod over all who stand in its way. A Dodge check allows a target to jump out of the way. An opposed Melee Combat check allows a Jackal to damage the creature, but the Gadakan still tramples the Jackal. 3d10 (16) to each affected target.
36–50%	*Trumpeting Bellow:* the Gadakan bellows at up to three targets who are adjacent to it. Targets react with a difficult Willpower check. If they fail, the bellow increases all Clash Point costs by 1 (2 on a fumble) for 1d4 rounds.
51–60%	*Crush (2 attacks):* the Gadakan jumps and smashes into a target, trampling the target beneath their feet. 3d12 (19) damage each.

MAVAKAN



These were the foot soldiers of Barak Barad, and therefore are among the more prevalent of the Takan in the Zaharets. Their simian-like forms provide them with greater strength than the average human, and their cunning is no less fierce. They tend to have simian features: broad chests, powerful arms, and short legs: and Jackals often find the Mavakan wearing leather armour pieced and stitched together from the bodies and gear of their foes. Many that also have chipped swords and axes of bronze.

MAVAKAN			
Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
Defence:	55%	Wounds:	30
Combat:	70%	Protection:	3 (leather + shield)
Knowledge:	40%	Move:	10
Urban:	40%	Initiative:	12
Common:	40%	Clash Points:	1.5
Influence:	*75%*	Treasure Score:	2
		Corruption	10

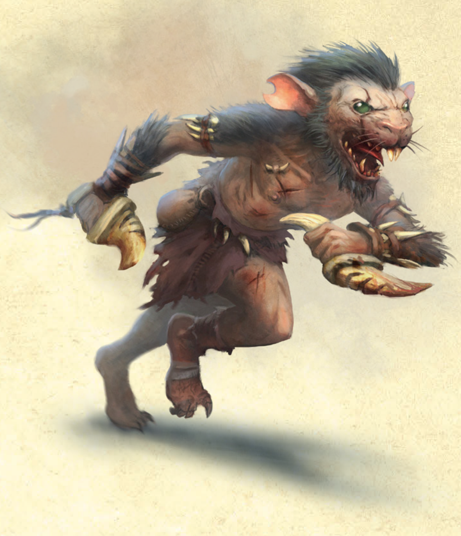
Special Abilities
Inured to Darkness
Howling Fury: the Mavakan possess a barely contained fury, which they often release in intimidating howls and other displays of aggression. This fury often causes lesser foes to flee. Once per battle, after inflicting damage, the Mavakan forces the target to make a difficult Willpower check. On a failure, the Mavakan inflicts 2d8 (9) Valour damage. If this reduces the target to 0 Valour, the target must make a second Willpower roll or flee the combat for 2d4 rounds.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*Glancing Blow:* the Mavakan strikes a glancing blow with its bronze weapon. 1d10 + 2d6 (12) damage.
16–25%	*Shield Bash:* the Mavakan slams its shield powerfully into its target. 3d6 (10) damage. The target must make an Endurance check or lose 1d4 Clash Points. On a fumble, the target loses all Clash Points until their next turn.
26–55%	*Hammering Blows (2 attacks):* the Mavakan pummels its foes with brutal blows. 1d10 + 2d6 (12) each.
56–70%	*Ruining Strike:* the Mavakan's strength damages the armour of its target. 2d10 + 2d6 (18). Additionally, reduce the target's Protection by 2 points (4 on a critical) as their shields and armour fail. Apply this damage to any shield the Jackal possesses first, then armour. A successful Craft roll after the battle allows a field repair, and restores 2 points of lost Protection.

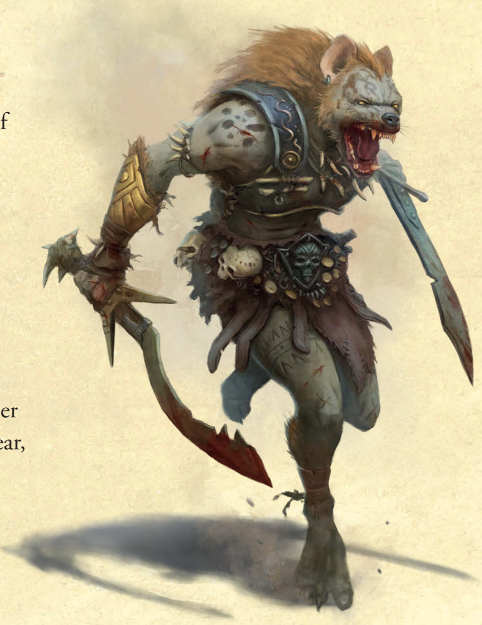
NORAKAN

The Norakan are the runts of the Takan bloodline. Small and foul, they multiply far more quickly than the rest of the Takan. They live much of their lives underground, digging tunnels beneath the earth for the rest of the Takan to use. They are skittish and have rodent-like features. They never wear more than a loincloth or straps of leather, and often attack with slings and weapons made of bone and stone.

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">NORAKAN</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td>Takan</td><td>Location:</td><td>The Zaharets</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Wounds:</td><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>45%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>0</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>65%</td><td>Move:</td><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>40%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>30%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>0.5</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>45%</td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Corruption:</td><td>10</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Inured to Darkness</i>
<i>Infectious Bite:</i> when a Norakan bites a Jackal, the Jackal must make an Endurance check to resist catching one of the diseases the filthy bite may transmit. On a failed check, the target counts as having 4 permanent Wounds until they heal from this disease. Every two days, the Jackal can make a new Endurance check to try to shake off the disease.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–10%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Weak Flail:</i> the Norakan lashes out from fear and does 2d4 (5) damage.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11–20%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Filthy Bite:</i> the Norakan deals 3d4 (7) damage on a hit and triggers its Infectious Bite special ability.</td></tr>
<tr><td>21–45%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Sneaky Assault (2 attacks):</i> the Norakan lashes out with claws at up to two targets, doing 2d4 (5) damage each.</td></tr>
<tr><td>46–65%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Frenzied Assault (3 attacks):</i> the Norakan attacks with two claw attacks at 2d4 (5) damage each, and with one bite attack at 3d4 (7) that triggers its Infectious Bite special ability.</td></tr>
</table>



ORITAKAN



The Oritakan were once the rulers of Barak Barad. Their maker placed a dark and terrible will for domination in the Oritakan's hearts, and they were the orchestrators of the Kingdom of Ignorance. All Luathi live in fear of the Oritakan, who brutally dominate the memory and history of the Children of Bronze. Shorter than the Mavakan, they are cunning and terrible foes. Unlike other Takan, Oritakan pick and choose their gear, searching for the best quality available to them. As such, these terrible foes of humanity wield gear nearly as powerful as that of any Melkoni or Trauj.

ORITAKAN

Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
		Wounds:	35
Defence:	70%	Protection:	2 (leather)
Combat:	60%	Move:	14
Knowledge:	50%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	40%	Clash Points:	2
Common:	70%	Treasure Score:	3
		Corruption:	10

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

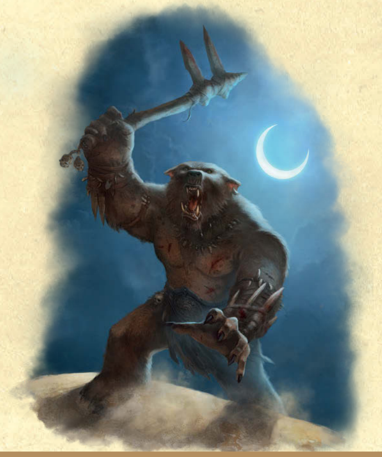
Commanding Presence: the high-pitched howls and orders of the Oritakan inspire the Takan around them. Each non-Oritakan Takan in the battle counts as having a trait that applies to their combat skills, as well as +5 Wounds.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Rallying Laughter:* the Oritakan howls with laughter, exulting in the battle. Each Takan recovers 1d8 Wounds.
16–30%	*Flail of Ignorance (2 attacks):* the Oritakan of Barak Barad used the flail to inspire their own to great acts of violence, or to rend the flesh of their slaves. Up to two targets take 2d8 + 2d6 (16) damage each. Or, the Oritakan can inflict this damage upon an ally to grant them a free attack at +15%.
31–55%	*Dance of Slaughter (multiple attacks):* the Oritakan makes an attack on each adjacent enemy for 2d8+2d6 (16) damage each.
56–60%	*I Know Your Name:* the Oritakan mimics the voice of a loved one or friend, sowing confusion. Each target must spend a Clash Point to make a difficult Willpower check. If the Oritakan wins, the chaotic cry causes the target to spend a Clash Point to lash out at an ally.

RETAKAN

The Retakan are known as the terrors in the dark of the wild. They are patient, stealthy, and sly, sneaking up on targets before bursting forth into an explosion of carnage. Many a caravan has fallen to the predations of the Retakan. They are dark in colour, with fur that helps them blend into their surroundings. Retakan prefer massive two-handed weapons, the better to kill a human in a single blow.

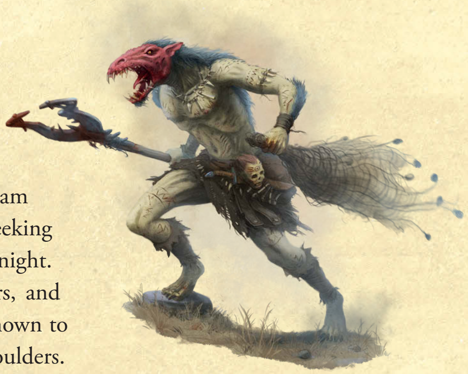


RETAKAN			
Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
Defence:	65%	Wounds:	55
Combat:	80%	Protection:	3 (natural)
Knowledge:	45%	Move:	15
Urban:	70%	Initiative:	15
Stealth:	*85%*	Clash Points:	3
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	2
		Corruption:	10

Special Abilities
Inured to Darkness
Lumbering Pounce: the Retakan can propel themselves across great distances with their powerful limbs. Twice per fight, the Retakan can pounce, doubling their Move and preventing characters from spending Clash Points against them for leaving combat. Additionally, they do +5 damage with attacks that turn, which represents the impact.
Murderous Stealth: when the Retakan attack from Stealth, it is almost impossible to react. Increase the Clash Points required to react to the initial attacks by +2.

Combat Range	
1–20%	*Crushing Embrace:* the Retakan catches its target in a crushing embrace. 3d10 (16) damage. The Retakan traps its target's arms. The trapped target must spend an action to make a difficult Athletics, Endurance, or Unarmed Combat check to escape. If they do not escape, the Retakan can continue to inflict damage on subsequent turns without a roll, the target is not allowed to spend a Clash Point to avoid this effect
21–50%	*Massive Blows (2 attacks):* the Retakan hammers upon foes within reach. Up to two targets take 2d8 + 3d6 (19) damage each.
51–65%	*Blinding Maul:* the Retakan takes a swipe at their foe's head. The Retakan's claws rake the target's face, doing 3d10 (16) damage. Additionally, the target must make a difficult Endurance check. On a failure, the wound blinds the target for 1d4 rounds. (Blind: The target must spend 3 additional Clash Points to do anything. This means they must spend 3 on their turn just to take their normal action.)
66–80%	*Explosion of Carnage (3 attacks):* 2d8 + 3d6 (19) damage each.

TSUTAKAN



The Luathi refer to these Takan as the hunters of men. For every ten men who escaped the lash of Barak Barad, the Tsutakan returned with the bones of nine. Tsutakan still roam the plains around settlements of the Luathi, seeking small groups of the unwary to carry off into the night. Tsutakan tend to hunt with nets, daggers, spears, and rope, the better to capture their prey. They are known to tie the heads of their victims to their belts and shoulders.

TSUTAKAN			
Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
		Wounds:	40
Defence:	65%	Protection:	2 (natural)
Combat:	75%	Move:	15
Knowledge:	50%	Initiative:	18
Urban:	50%	Clash Points:	3
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	2
		Corruption:	10

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Tireless Pursuit: the Tsutakan will pursue a target to the gates of a city and beyond. Should they catch the scent of the Jackals, they will doggedly pursue them. This causes a +1 Mettle loss to all Survival rolls, as the pursuit wearies the party.

Seklah: the Tsutakan take pleasure in the pain and misery they cause. Twice per battle, the Tsutakan can inflict a painful bleeding wound. On a successful hit, the target takes half damage, but the wound causes the character to suffer –20% to all skill checks, as well as 1d6 Valour damage per turn. A wounded character can take their turn to bind the wound. The target must pass a hard Willpower check to remove the penalty.

Combat Range

1–15%	*Just a Taste:* the Tsutakan takes a tearing bite out of the flesh of their target. 2d6 (7) damage and 1d6 bleed damage for rounds equal to the bleed damage rolled (e.g., 2 points of damage for 2 rounds, 4 points of damage for 4 rounds).
16–25%	*Hamstring:* the Tsutakan rips the back of their target's legs to hobble them. 3d6 (10) damage, and the wound reduces the target's Move by half. Additionally, Hamstring reduces the target's speed to 0. It requires a successful Healing check or rite to restore mobility (the check does not increase the healing rate, but merely restores the target's ability to move).
26–65%	*Blackened Spear (2 attacks):* the Tsutakan makes two quick jabs with its spear. 1d10 + 2d6 (12) damage each. The Tsutakan can split this attack between two targets. This is either a melee or ranged attack.
66–75%	*Marked for Death:* the Tsutakan marks the target. No one is sure how they accomplish this, but it seems to be some sort of instinctual rite. While marked, all other Takan receive +10% and +3 damage against the target. Additionally, the Tsutakan can unerringly track their target. This effect lasts until the Jackal removes it using a Remove Corruption seasonal action. Subsequent marks do not stack.

CHAPTER 10

ADVENTURES

The following chapter contains three adventures to get you started in the Zaharets. If you are a player, it is highly recommended that you do not read any further, as you might spoil your enjoyment of the adventures. The first adventure (*The Bronze Bell*) can be set anywhere in the Zaharets, allowing you to establish your own corner of the War Road for your game. The other two adventures (*The Lost Children* and *The Wolves' Lair*) lead into the next *Jackals* supplement – *Jackals: Fall of the Children of Bronze* – and introduce the northern and southern reaches of the War Road.

The Bronze Bell is an adventure set in a typical Luathi town somewhere along the War Road, in which the Jackals must deal with a mysterious artefact and solve the murders in the town.

The Lost Children is set in Sentem and provides a good introduction to that region and its NPCs. Youths from Densom have gone missing, and for several reasons, Sentem's militia cannot search for them. Locals hire the Jackals to see what happened to the town's young men and women.

The Wolves' Lair is set in Orsem Yahan, on the northern end of the War Road. Wolves have been raiding caravans into the Luasa Desert. The tension with the Trauj over this matter is coming to a head, and the Nawsi of Orsem Yahan needs Jackals to discover and slay the Wolves behind the raids.

THE BRONZE BELL

OVERVIEW

The village of Jabalem is in dire straits. Villagers see strange shapes at night, city guards have gone missing, and the Nawsi of the village has put out a call for Jackals to solve the mystery of what has happened to his men. As the Jackals begin to dig deeper, they uncover a larger mystery that threatens the town.

Six months ago, during a Takan hunt in the mountains, Nawsi Hanno's patrol was slain. Hanno alone returned, weeks later, limping from a poorly bandaged spear wound in his thigh. He told Jabalem his guards died bravely, and the Takan threat was gone. He lied.

Takan did not slaughter Hanno and his men, but something ancient and dark in the mountains did. It was not content with the slaughter, however, and kept Hanno alive long past the deaths of the others. It then snuffed out Hanno's life, and through dark rites, replaced it with something else, something willing to do its bidding in the world of humanity.

The Thing that Looks Like Hanno has been biding its time, gathering what it needs for a Mouathenic ritual to summon its master from where it lies imprisoned in the mountains. The Thing also replaced Hanno's dead guards with new ones who serve its master. However, someone in the town is aware of The Thing's actions, as its new guards have begun disappearing in the night. The Thing has no patience for this, so when the villagers suggested hiring Jackals, it willingly did so. The Thing that Looks Like Hanno is hopeful that while the Jackals root out its opponent, it can finish the ritual, and perhaps provide its master with new bodies to inhabit.

JABALEM

Jabalem is not on the map of the War Road, so the Loremaster can place it wherever they like. Getting the group to Jabalem is a simple matter: it can be an overnight stay on a journey to Sentem or Ameena Noani. Rumours travel far in the Zaharets, so the village's need for aid quickly reaches many ears. Or perhaps some of the characters are from Jabalem, and your campaign can begin there.

Read or paraphrase the following:

The path to Jabalem from the main trade road is steep and winding. The walled village sits on the end of the A'hule Asa, on a defensible cliff face overlooking the War Road. Several times, your heart stops at the sheer drop of the cliff face you walk along. Soon, you and your pack pass through the gate of Jabalem and into the town. It is quiet – the everyday noises you would expect are muted in the bright noon sun. Towards the centre of town sits a short, round building made of green stone, much like those found in many Luathi villages. Inside, you suppose you will find Nawsi Hanno, the captain of the guard.

Nawsi Hanno has sent notice for Jackals to complete a job for him. He is tall, and forced to stoop in the low building as he pours over maps. While Hanno keeps the hair on the top of his head trimmed short for his helmet, his beard is long, which indicates the status he holds in Jabalem. As the Jackals approach, he dismisses everyone else in the area, as he wishes to talk to them alone.

Hanno relates the following information:

- His guards are going missing.
- Four have disappeared during the night over the past three weeks, along with all their equipment. Hanno meets any suggestion the guards deserted with scorn.
- The missing guards are his best fighters and most loyal. They would not leave him, or the town.
- No one saw them leave the town, either.

Hanno suggests the characters begin at the houses from which his men disappeared: perhaps they can discover more than his men have.

The Town of Jabalem

Below are important places and people the players will encounter in town during their investigation.

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Sights – a bustling town full of mud-brick buildings and rough wooden walls. Closer inspection reveals no children playing in the streets, and the guards moving in groups.

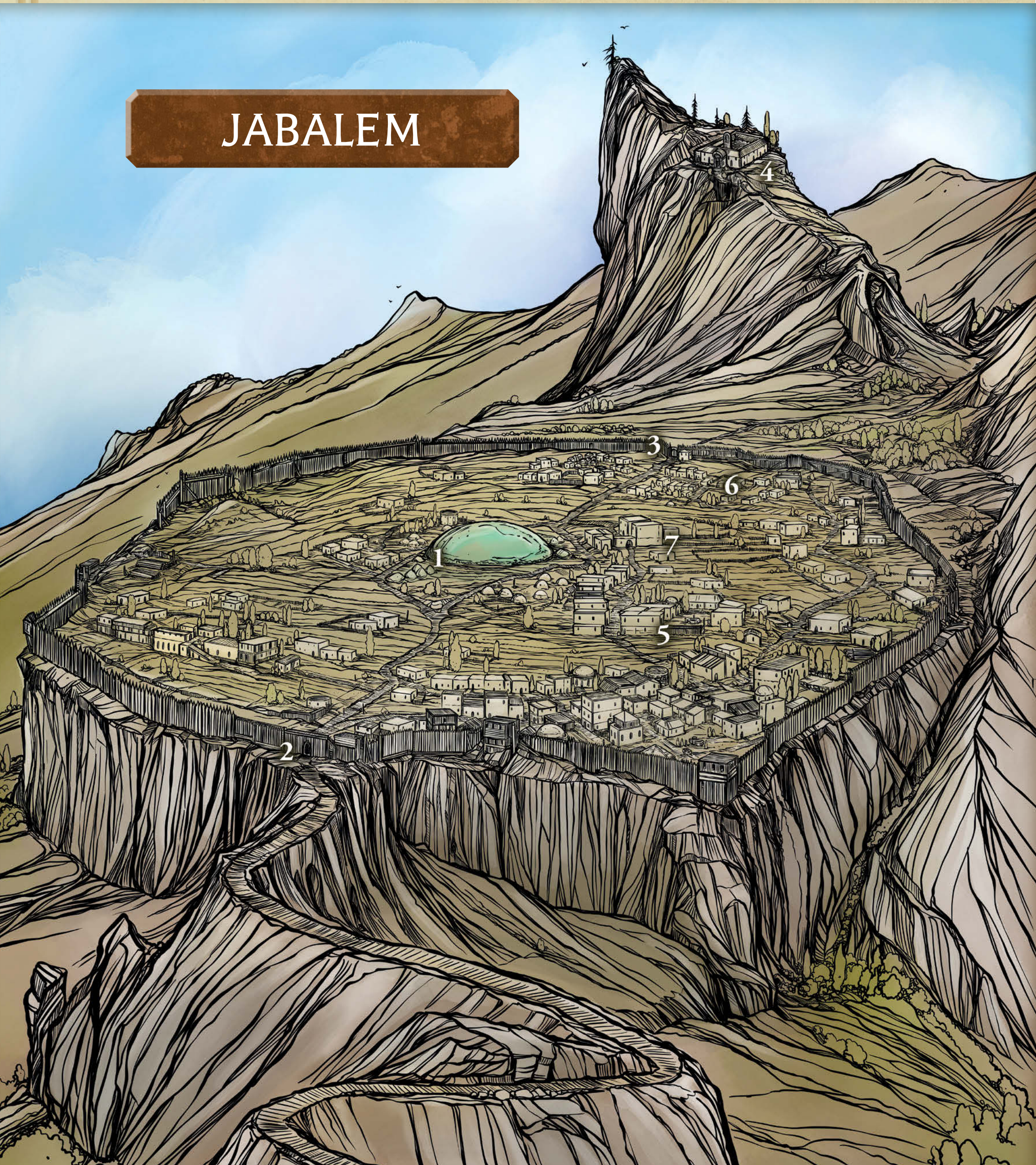
Smells – people living in close proximity.

Sounds – muted conversations, and occasional loud noises from the marketplace or redsmith that startle nearby citizens.

Places in Jabalem

1. The Centre Building

Low and round, this building is old; and the ancient style is not Luathi, although the surrounding town architecture is. Like many other Luathi villages, the people of Jabalem built around one of the ancient Hulathi ruins in the Zaharets. This ruin is made of strange green stone, which perpetually smells of brine and saltwater. Jackals can find Nawsi Hanno and 1d6 of his men here at any time. Hanno does not appear to ever rest or leave his post.



2. Southern Gate

This is the main gate that leads to and from the War Road. The guards bar the wooden gates at night. Two of Hanno's guards are always on duty, answering questions and questioning travellers in turn as they arrive in Jabalem. The guards are not overly suspicious, but they keep a wary eye on the Jackals. None of the guards approve of Nawsi Hanno's decision to use outsiders to investigate. If the Jackals need a push to investigate, one of the guards can contact the Jackals off duty and give them more information about the expedition to the mountains.

3. Northern Gate

This gate leads to into the A'hule Asa mountains and to the Luathi temple set higher on the hill. A narrow, dusty path leads up to the temple. Jackals typically find only one guard here. This guard warns the Jackals about hiking through the mountains. There are Takan and Nehushta out there.

4. Luathi Temple

Set high on the hill, the temple overlooks Jabalem. Jackals can find Yatunit, a Kahar of Alwain, here. She can see anyone approaching the temple due to the long series of switchbacks. The temple itself is a large courtyard enclosed by a series of narrow rooms. There are several rooms for ritual cleansing, along with a larger room that holds the altar. Beneath the temple are cellars where Yatunit keeps food from the town's offerings. Anyone in the town who is in need of food knows they can find help at the temple. A large bronze bell hangs in the front courtyard.

The temple is always open from dawn until dusk. Yatunit leads rites to Alwain, and makes sacrifices on behalf of the town. Notably absent from these rites are Nawsi Hanno and about half of the guards. He claims he should remain in Jabalem during the services to watch any foreigners and others who do not follow Alwain faithfully.

Yatunit can only ring the bronze bell by striking it, as it has no clapper. The symbols and runes etched along the rim of the bell are not Luathi. In fact, they seem to be of Gerwa origin. Yatunit commissioned a bronze mallet from Tagi, which she uses to strike the bell to signal dawn and dusk, or the start of a rite.

Along the rim are a series of Gerwa glyphs. Anyone able to read them can discover the following story:

The Flesh of the Earth heard the children's cries. The Flesh of the Earth came to the children's rescue. No evil beast stood in its way. The children were grateful. They promised many sacrifices and praises to the Flesh of the Earth. The bell called through the earth, and the children were safe.

Should a Jackal ring the bell by hitting it with anything other than Yatunit's mallet, the Jackals hear a strong tone, which seems to resonate through the air.

5. Redsmith

The redsmith, Tagi, has a decent-sized area to craft weapons and armour for the guards, as well as the tools the village needs. Tagi is willing to trade, but Jackals will probably find better deals in the market. Two apprentices and a journeyman help Tagi. If plied with silver, they are willing to step aside for a quick minute to share rumours about the missing men. The main rumour around town is that the missing guards were involved in dark matters. They cannot provide any specifics, however. If Tagi catches his apprentices being idle, he will chase the Jackals off and refuse to speak with them any longer. The Loremaster should roll on the tables on pages 164-165 to see what quality of goods are available here.

6. Market

The small market is situated near the Northern Gate. Trauj often come to trade for wool, sheepskin, and bronze work, bringing their own woven and crafted goods. The Trauj also provide the guards with decent bows. The Loremaster should roll on the tables on pages 164–165 to see the quality of the goods available for purchase.

7. The Hostel

There is one hostel within Jabalem, and it also serves as the barracks for Hanno's remaining guards. The hostel consists of two buildings butted up against each other. One provides the villagers and travellers with alcoholic refreshment and an evening's rest. The other building is half barracks, half stables.

NPCs of Jabalem

Sari Ela, Sar of Jabalem

Ela is the Sar (leader) of Jabalem. She is unaware of any changes in Hanno, as the captain continues to perform his job well. She is suspicious of Yatunit, since the Kahar lives outside town and yet wields considerable power in Jabalem. She is also suspicious of Jackals, as they are 'outsiders'.

Nawsi Hanno, Captain of the Guard

Hanno is a shell possessed by a chaotic spirit that is attempting to draw dark powers to Jabalem. He hires the Jackals to investigate what is happening to his guards, fearing what their disappearance means for his plots. He is abnormally tall for a Luathi, and speaks gruffly and without care of giving offence. He is very prideful, and if suspicion for anything falls on him, he will dismiss the Jackals and refuse to speak with them again. A successful difficult Perception or Influence check tells the Jackals that there is something not quite right about the good captain.

Shuma, Hostel Keeper

Jovial to the point of caricature, Shuma loves a good story, and has heard just about all of them. If questioned about the missing guards, Shuma tells the Jackals that no one will miss them: those guards always seemed to be causing trouble with the villagers. They were recent arrivals, coming at the personal request of Nawsi Hanno. About six months ago, Hanno had ridden north along the mountain range, and all the men with him were killed. He made it back to town, and shortly afterwards, these new men arrived. They seemed to give off a stench that you could not ever place.

Tagi, Head Redsmith

Tagi is of average height for a Luathi, but very stocky, and he knows his craft well. If questioned, he affects a misunderstanding of the request and dodges straight answers. If the Jackals can gain his trust, he will admit to praying in the temple for the guards to disappear. The guards harassed his daughter and frightened her. Nawsi Hanno was quick to ask for forgiveness for his men, but the behaviour continued. The night after Tagi prayed at the temple, the first guard went missing. He is fearful the Jackals will turn him in, and that Hanno will punish him.

Yatunit, Kahar of Alwain

A calm, middle-aged woman with an air of wisdom, Yatunit has a warm smile and kind eyes. Jackals can see the bronze mallet for the bell hanging from her belt, and she is never without it. She has lived her whole life in Jabalem, and only left to seek more training in Sentem before returning as quickly as possible. She affects a motherly attitude towards the townsfolk, calling them her children. She claims the disappearances disturb her, but since the guards are not natives of the town, she does not have much to say on the subject. Yatunit will deny any request to search the temple. Any Kahars are welcome to stay the night, but she encourages other Jackals to spend the night at the hostel.

Zabul

A wool and woven cloth merchant, this Luathi is pleasant enough, but dislikes Trauj. One can often hear Umeyda mocking his height, possibly because Zabul is shorter than both her and the average Luathi. Zabul refuses to comment on rumours and suppositions, but will tell any Luathi who gains his trust a single piece of information: Zabul saw Yatunit on the night of the last disappearance. She was carrying a bundle and sneaking through the night. Zabul does not wish to speak ill of the Kahar, but he worries she knows more than she leads others to believe.

Umeyda, Merchant for Trauj

Quick to mock the softer peoples, Umeyda stands abnormally tall, even for a Trauj. She has a strong build, and is able to demonstrate skill with the bows she sells. She knows nothing of the troubles caused by the guards, but wants to leave the town quickly. It has a 'dark story' to it, she says, and she fears it will not last long in the coming days.

Gashur, Deshi, Zikar, and Zamir

The four guards who disappeared. Hanno recruited all four of them personally. Not many in town have a positive word to say about any of these men. Although they might not admit it, many townsfolk are relieved that the guards disappeared.

THE DISAPPEARANCES

The first disappearance was from a house close to the Northern Gate. Gashur commandeered this house for himself shortly before disappearing. The previous family who lived there has no desire to return to that cursed place. A successful hard Perception check uncovers loose dirt under the bed. A short amount of time spent digging collapses the loose roof of a tunnel. The tunnel is 2 cubits tall (1 yard) and requires Jackals to crawl along its length. It is unnaturally smooth. A close inspection reveals that something scraped the walls smooth, as if by hundreds of small shovels. Or legs? Following the tunnel brings the Jackals in a circle that passes and connects all of the other crime scenes underground. One tunnel leads away from this circle. It heads north at an incline.

Treasure: 100 ss in the form of a ring shaped like a wrapped whip, a fine Trauj bow with a dozen arrows, and fine-scale armour with blood stains. This equipment belonged to the missing Gashur. Jackals should not wear this through town, as Hanno will recognise the armour and attempt to arrest the Jackals.

The second disappearance was from a house close to the redsmith. Deshi the guardsman disappeared while inside. He talked often about how attractive he found the redsmith's daughter. This house has fewer clues, but if Jackals know where to look, and make a successful Perception check, they can find traces of a tunnel under the table in the kitchen. Digging in this entrance exposes buried belongings. It might seem as though someone left the gear here and planned to come back to collect the belongings.

Treasure: 30 ss, two bronze daggers, and one long spear.

The third disappearance happened close to the market. The merchants caught the guardsman Zikar stealing from their wares before he disappeared, which they will tell the Jackals if asked. This house is almost completely devoid of signs of a tunnel or excavation. If a Jackal wants to examine the bed, they can find blood in the straw mattress. If investigated, the sheets seem to be newer than the rest of the belongings. Jackals can find a nice bronze dagger (stolen from Zabul) hidden in the straw mattress as treasure.

The fourth disappearance happened at the hostel. The fourth guardsman, Zamir, disappeared from here only three nights ago. Jackals can find the hostel keeper, Shuma, serving drinks and willing to trade a good room for an even better story. If the Jackals inspect the barracks, the two guards watch them intently. They can glean little from this location. Any evidence within the room of the hostel has been disturbed by too many people moving through it.

DEEPER INTO THE DARK

Once the Jackals find the tunnel, they can follow it to see where it leads.

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Sights – dirt walls scraped away to form a roughly circular tunnel.

Smells – dry, stale air and the vague scent of something rotting.

Sounds – the tunnels mute any noise from the town, and Jackals will become very aware of their own breathing.

The Tunnel

Following the tunnel leads the Jackals to the site of each disappearance and to a small entrance large enough to pull a man through. A careful study of the tunnel reveals small traces of blood along the walls. The tunnel forks once, and Jackals can follow it up an incline, as if heading up inside the mountains. The tunnel eventually widens, and the Jackals can stand. Many Trauj are still too tall for the tunnel. A walk of about 20 minutes brings the Jackals to a small cavern off the main tunnel. There is a 20% chance of there being an uncracked egg in the cavern.

If the egg is uncracked, read the following aloud:

An egg lies in the centre of the cavern. Brushing off the dirt, the exterior is revealed as a hard, white surface. The egg is almost completely spheroid and a foot in diameter. It rocks just a little, as if the creature inside is ready to hatch.

If the Jackals attempt to see through the egg (using a lantern or torch), they can glimpse a coiled centipede.

If the egg is cracked, read the following aloud:

Two halves of an egg lay in the centre of the chamber. A closer investigation shows that whatever hatched did so recently, and has more than a dozen legs.

Loud noises will alert the Aburrisanu queen to the fact that there has been an intrusion into its home. If alerted, the Aburrisanu will ambush the intruders through the tunnel wall and attempt to drag at least one Jackal with it.

If the Jackals focus on sneaking through the tunnels, they have a 30% chance of surprising the Aburrisanu in its resting chamber, another 10 minutes up the tunnel.

Aburrisanu Queen

The Aburrisanu left bloodstained clothes in its chamber, along with bones from the four missing men. Beyond the chamber is a tunnel leading up to the cellar beneath the Luathi temple. Use the following stats for the queen:

ABURRISANU QUEEN			
Type:	Monstrous Creature	Location:	Jabalem
		Wounds:	24
Defence:	65%	Protection:	3 (natural)
Combat:	65%	Move:	15
Knowledge:	10%	Initiative:	12
Urban:	65%	Clash Points:	4
Common:	60%	Treasure Score:	0
		Corruption:	6

Special Abilities

Opportunist: the Aburrisanu gets +20% to its attack skill against characters who are suffering penalties to their Move.

Movement of Earth: Aburrisanu can crawl on walls and ceilings, ignoring any penalties to Move.

Combat Range	
1–15%	*What Big Mandibles You Have (2 attacks):* the Aburrisanu bites at one target. 1d8 + 1d4 (7) damage each.
16–35%	*Poison Claws:* the Aburrisanu uses its toxicognaths to pierce a target. 2d6 (7) damage. Additionally, the Aburrisanu poisons the target. They reduce the target's Move by 50% and their Clash Points by 2, and the target must make an Endurance check. On a success, they can shake off the effects in 2 rounds. On a failure, the venom's effects last for 4 rounds.
36–50%	*Trample:* the Aburrisanu tramples up to three characters within 15 yards of each other. 3d8 (13) damage, as the Aburrisanu knocks the Jackals to the ground, and they lose 2 Clash Points each. A Dodge check allows a target to jump out of the way. An opposed Melee Combat check allows a Jackal to damage the creature, but the Aburrisanu still tramples the Jackal.
51–70%	*Burrow and Drag:* the Aburrisanu burrows into the earth. The Aburrisanu can drag along any target in the line of its burrow, including those above the tunnel. It will carry the targets 10 yards and inflict 2d12 (13) damage to each. The Aburrisanu can travel another 20 yards without the targets and reappear to harry them within 20 yards of the beginning of the burrow.

Summoner and Summoned

It is impossible to reason with the Aburrisanu without Yatunit present. There is a 50% chance that sounds of combat will draw the Kahar's attention. She cannot reason with the monster, but she can turn it away and send it back into the earth if she has a good reason to do so. The unique combination of Yatunit's desperation and devotion activated the bell's power, and summoned forth the Aburrisanu queen. It seeks out those she dreams are harmful to her town. After the Jackals defeat the Aburrisanu, either in the tunnel or in its resting chamber, they find the missing guards' clothes and even another set of leather armour in the cellar with the rest of the missing property. Yatunit brought it all back to the temple to encourage the belief that the guards went missing.

Jackals who confront Yatunit about the Aburrisanu hear the whole story from her. Read or paraphrase the following:

Have you ever heard children cry? Were you able to walk away from that pain? If so, you have a harder heart than I. Something is wrong with Nawsi Hanno. He became lost in the mountains, and he never returned. Something else walks in his body, and he has made my children, the people of Jabalem, cry. I was listening to the cries of my children, and I prayed. I prayed to Alwain to deliver His children from this evil. As I prayed, I struck the bell. Alwain heard my prayer. He sent me the Aburrisanu to mete judgement to those who commit evil in Jabalem. The Aburrisanu has taken them from this land, and I followed to clean the mess the monster left.

Plans and Consequences

It is now up to the Jackals to decide what to do. They found the perpetrator of the disappearances, yet the Kahar swears she is doing the right thing for Jabalem. For Luathi Jackals, the word of a Kahar is weighty indeed. A Kahar is the intermediary between the people and Alwain. If Yatunit believes the guards were corrupt, it should at least give the Luathi in the pack pause.

Attacking Yatunit will bring Corruption on the Jackals (as per page 152), but you should not let them know that beforehand. Yatunit attempts to convince the group that they must stop Hanno. She has only her visions from Alwain to guide her. Any Kahar seeking guidance from Alwain receives a dream or vision of Hanno. In it, his muscles writhe beneath his skin, and his eyes flare with cold light.

Yatunit explains how she wanted to use the Aburrisanu to attack Nawsi Hanno, but was unable to reach him in the centre building. He refuses to leave the building, unless he is with several of his men. Yatunit begs the Jackals to investigate Hanno: she can feel the darkness growing in the centre of Jabalem. Unbeknown to all, Hanno is attempting to fuel and complete a dark ritual in the cellar of the greenstone building. Hanno has built a small altar in the cellar. He pulled down the carvings which once adorned the walls and used them to construct the altar, which he has bathed in blood and other foulness. When Hanno ventured out into the mountains, Hanno the man died. The Rathic placed a weak reincarnation of a Takan chieftain his body, and returned it to town. If Hanno completes the ritual, the Thing in the Mountains, a Rathic of old, will gain a foothold into the world again. It bolsters Nawsi Hanno with its dark magics, augmenting the man's natural abilities.

The Jackals can confront Nawsi Hanno in his building. This gives him benefits in his fight against the Jackals, and it is likely that there are a dozen other guards in the building with him. But he is willing to come with the Jackals if they present solid evidence of who the perpetrator is.

If the Jackals manage to get him out of his building, they have a better chance at defeating him. Hanno has 1d4 guards with him at any time. If the Jackals talked with the townsfolk, they might be able to convince Tagi, Umeyda, or some of the other guards to join them. The townsfolk can keep other corrupted guards away (negating the first instance of Hanno's Call for Aid attack, see below). Yatunit will send the Aburrisanu (should it still live) to help the Jackals: it arrives within 1d4 rounds, and will focus its attacks on Nawsi Hanno.

Nawsi Hanno

Use the following stats for Hanno:

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">NAWSI HANNO</th></tr>
<tr><td>Type:</td><td>Human</td><td>Location:</td><td>Jabalem</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Wounds:</td><td>40</td></tr>
<tr><td>Defence:</td><td>65%</td><td>Protection:</td><td>4 (natural + leather)</td></tr>
<tr><td>Combat:</td><td>70%</td><td>Move:</td><td>16</td></tr>
<tr><td>Knowledge:</td><td>40%</td><td>Initiative:</td><td>15</td></tr>
<tr><td>Urban:</td><td>40%</td><td>Clash Points:</td><td>5</td></tr>
<tr><td>Common:</td><td>45%</td><td>Treasure Score:</td><td>1</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Corruption</td><td>12</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Special Abilities</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4"><i>Fight Together:</i> guards are used to working as a group. When a guard attacks a target who is within melee range of another guard, they do +4 damage with their attacks and gain +2 Protection.
<i>Skilled Fighter:</i> Hanno begins the fight with one advanced talent in Melee Combat.
<i>Not Quite Human:</i> the spirit in Hanno, when enraged, begins to force the flesh of the guard captain into a more Rathic-like state. When Hanno drops below 15 wounds, he takes on a more Takan visage and gains the following bonuses: +8 wounds, +2 Protection, +20% to Combat skills, +1d6 damage in melee.</td></tr>
<tr><th colspan="4">Combat Range</th></tr>
<tr><td>1–10%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Call for Aid:</i> the guard blows a horn, cries for help, or lights a signal beacon. In 1d4 rounds, 1d6 additional guards arrive. This action can only be taken once per combat.</td></tr>
<tr><td>11–25%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Bash:</i> the guard attacks the target with the boss of their shield, or with the haft of their spear. 2d8 (9) damage and the target lose a 1d4 Clash Points.</td></tr>
<tr><td>26–40%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Spear Thrust (2 attacks):</i> the guard attacks the target with a series of rapid spear thrusts. 2d8 (9) each.</td></tr>
<tr><td>41–50%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Incapacitate:</i> the guard attempts to incapacitate their target. This attack causes the target to lose 1d6 Clash Points for as long as the guard has them incapacitated. Should this reduce the target's Clash Points to 0, they are unable to take any action besides an Athletics or Unarmed Combat check to break free. While maintaining Incapacitate, the guard receives a +20% bonus to their Combat skill to maintain the hold. Additional guards can attempt to subdue the same target, each guard providing an additional −1d6 Clash Points and +20% to Combat skills.</td></tr>
<tr><td>51–70%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Dark Magics:</i> The spirit of an ancient Takan possesses Hanno's body, empowered by a Rathic. It can call upon its dark master to aid it. All opponents within 5 yards must make a difficult Willpower check. Those who fail see visions of Barak Barad, cowing them with images of their ancestors' slavery by the Takan, causing 3d6 Valour damage and −1d4 Clash Points for 1d4 rounds until the visions clear. On a successful check, the Jackal shakes off the worst of the effects, causing 1d6 Valour damage and −1 Clash Point for half the duration. No damage on a critical.</td></tr>
<tr><td>71–90%</td><td colspan="3"><i>Inhuman Flurry (4 attacks):</i> Hanno attacks with an inhuman ferocity. 2d8 (9) each.</td></tr>
</table>

AFTERMATH

Disastrous Rituals: If the Jackals do not stop Hanno, either because they never confront him or because they kill Yatunit, then the end is near for Jabalem. In 2d6 days, Hanno conducts a Mouathenic ritual with his remaining men. The town disappears into a hole in the earth. The only survivor is Umeyda, who leaves town right after the Jackals do. She spreads the news that the town is gone, and places the blame on shoulders of the Jackals who could not save it.

Successful Peace: If the Jackals stop Hanno, either because they allow Yatunit to finish her own plan or because they slay Hanno, they save the town of Jabalem. Yatunit and the townsfolk are on alert and keep any other Takan or unsavoury types away. Jabalem becomes a sanctuary town for these Jackals.

Advancements

- 1 for surviving
- 1 for slaying Hanno
- 1 for discovering Yatunit's involvement
- 1 for discovering the truth of the bell

Hooks

There's something else in the mountains: that which looked through Hanno's eyes as the Jackals slew him. It now knows the Jackals' names, and it begins to haunt their steps.

THE LOST CHILDREN

OVERVIEW

Sentem is the seat of Luathi power in the southern Zaharets. The multiple rivers in the area have led to rafting as a pastime among the people. Several youths from the nearby town of Densom recently went rafting down to the coast to spend the night by the old coastal ruin. They were supposed be back many days ago. Unbeknown to the people of Sentem and Densom, Takan from Bartak Kentak have taken their children. Unless the Jackals get involved, the Takan will slay the youths for their foul practices.

Sentem sits at the southern edge of the War Road, along the coast. See Chapter 9 for the gazetteer on the Southern Reaches.

When the characters arrive, read or paraphrase the following:

As you approach the gates of Sentem, there is a commotion in the gatehouse. A half-dozen men and women are arguing with a dark-skinned Gerwa man. They seem to be asking about the location of children.

The Gerwa man is Ba-en Nafar, best friend and aid to Sameel. The families of the two towns are clamouring for his attention. Among the crowd are Gan, the redsmith of Sentem, and Avi, the Sari of Densom. Their children, Taom and Huldel, respectively, are among those missing.

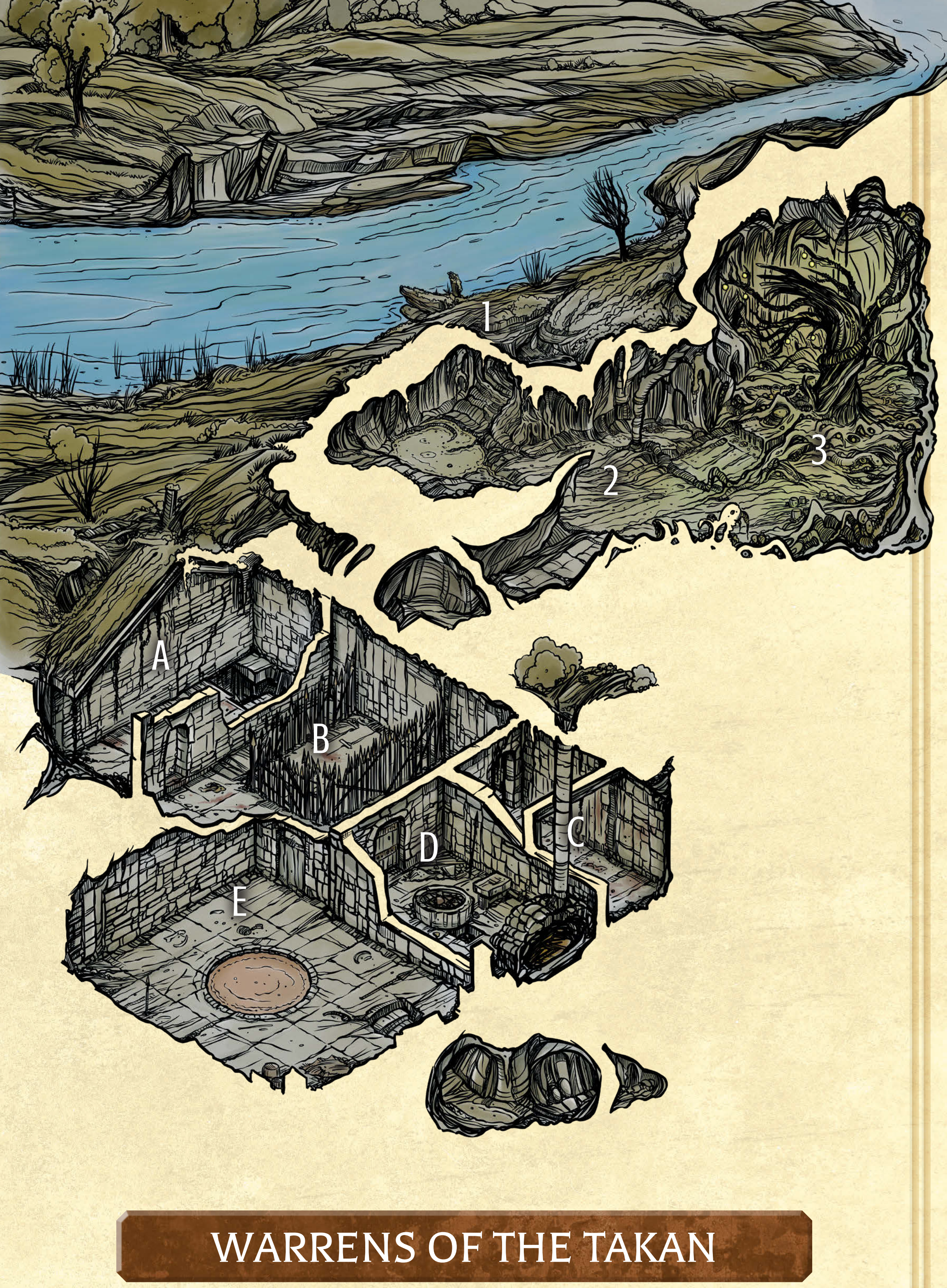
Ba-en is attempting to calm the people and assure them that Sameel is working on it, but with the annual raid coming up, they are shorthanded. Should the group need a prompt, someone in the crowd yells "There are Jackals!"

Ba-en can let the Jackals know the following:

- Fifteen youths have gone missing along the Asa Etho; nine boys and six girls.
- They should have been back nearly a week ago.
- Sameel – Nawsi of Sentem and son of the ruler – is busy planning an annual raid on Bartak Kentak. He has no guards to spare to search for the children.
- Ba-en is willing to pay the Jackals 15 ss to run down the river and bring the kids back. Ba-en believes the youths are just being youths, but he is willing to pay to get Avi and the others off his back.
- He also informs the Jackals of the Takan bounty (1 cs per head), although he doubts they will encounter any along the river.
- He can provide rafts for the Jackals, should they ask for them.

ALONG THE RIVER

It is a 3-day (1.5 by boat) journey down the river to the old ruin on the coast, which requires only one travel roll. Should the characters roll an encounter, use Norakan (number of party × 2). Near sunset on the second day, the Jackals come across the remnants of a campsite and several small rafts. A fight happened here, as one of the young men is dead. A successful Perception or Survival check can tell the Jackals this happened about 15 days ago. There are Takan tracks throughout the site, and they lead down towards the river. A quick exploration reveals a small Norakan tunnel leading under the riverbank.



WARRENS OF THE TAKAN

THE WARRENS OF THE TAKAN

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Sights – muddy footprints, and soaked earthen walls shored up with timber and bone. Water dripping from the warren's ceilings into pools on the ground. Takan tracks in the mud.

Smells – damp, rot, and filth. Further back in the caves are the smells of rotting vegetation.

Sounds – dripping water, whispers in the dark, and scurrying noises.

1. Entry

Norakan dug the tunnel: as such, it is too small for a normal-sized human. A Jackal requires a successful Athletics check to pull themselves through. Once two people have made it through the opening, it becomes wide enough for others to pass through. The entire cavern system is pitch black, save for the room where the Takan are keeping the youths.

2. The Main Warren

The Norakan spent months hollowing out this warren as a respite from Sameel's raids. They assumed the youths were spying on them, captured them, and sent a runner for an Oritakan by the name of Grethspec. Grethspec arrived yesterday evening, and has spent the past day interrogating the youths.

At any given time, there are six Norakan in the main warren. All but one throw themselves at the characters, while one runs to gather more of its kind from the altar room and the ruins.

Scattered throughout the warren are treasures the Takan have taken from raids or found in the ruins. Taking 10 minutes to search the warren with light turns up: 140 ss, three crude short spears (–5% skill, +2 damage), and a small figurine of a tree cast in silver worth 55 ss.

Spending this 10 minutes searching summons 13 more Norakan from other rooms.

There is another tunnel, in the southeastern wall. This tunnel appears to be shored up by bricks, and upon closer inspection it is actually a brick wall (see **4. Ruins** below).

3. The Altar of the Black Tree

At the back of the warren is a small cave, which the Norakan shaman ordered its tribe to dig. Jackals can find the shaman and five Norakan here at any point. The shaman has the following stats:

NORAKAN SHAMAN

Type:	Takan	Location:	The Zaharets
		Wounds:	12
Defence:	45%	Protection:	0
Combat:	75%	Move:	12
Knowledge:	40%	Initiative:	15
Urban:	30%	Clash Points:	0.5
Common:	45%	Treasure Score:	1
		Corruption:	15

Special Abilities

Inured to Darkness

Infectious Bite: when the Norakan shaman bites a Jackal, the Jackal must make an Endurance check to resist catching one of the diseases the filthy bite may transmit. On a failed check, the target counts as having 4 permanent Wounds until they heal from this disease. Every two days, the Jackal can make a new Endurance check to try to shake off the disease.

Combat Range

1–10%	*Weak Flail:* the Norakan lashes out from fear and does a 2d4 (5) damage.
11–20%	*Filthy Bite:* the Norakan deals 3d4 (7) damage on a hit and triggers its Infectious Bite special ability.
21–45%	*Sneaky Assault (2 attacks):* the Norakan lashes out with its claws at up to two targets, doing 2d4 (5) damage each.
46–65%	*Frenzied Assault (3 attacks):* the Norakan shaman attacks with two claws at 2d4 (5) each, and with one bite attack at 3d4 (7) that triggers its Infectious Bite special ability.
66–75%	*Dream Spectre (1d6 Attacks):* the Norakan shaman summons a foul terror from the Dream Road, and it rips through the mind of its target. The rite affects 1d6 targets with the terror of the Dream Spectre. The targets must make a difficult Willpower check. If it fails, they suffer 3d8 Valour damage and –2 Clash Points for as long as the shaman lives. If they succeed, they suffer half the damage and –1 Clash Point for as long as the shaman lives.

Here in the cave, there grows a black, leafless tree. Corruption stunted the tree, twisting it. To a Jackal's eye, it looks bloated with rot. The tree gives off a sickly pale light from iridescent vines that twist around it and strangle their way into the bark. Despite having no leaves, the tree has 1d8 pale yellow fruits hanging from its branches.

The shaman uses the fruit to craft the vision brew it uses. In its raw form, the flesh of the fruit is poisonous to all humanoids. If someone were to eat one, it would require a hard Endurance check. If the Jackal fails the check, they suffer a permanent –1d4 to Mettle and gain 1d4 Corruption. On a successful check, the target suffers 2d6 Wounds.

Among the roots of the tree are small, clay dishes, filled with a sickly yellow liquid. This is the distilled essence of the fruit, and it enables the Takan shamans to separate their spirit from their flesh to travel the Dream Road. If a Jackal ingests it, they will do the same. They immediately drop to the ground and appear as if they are dead for 1 hour. During that time, their spirit travels the Dream Road, which requires a Willpower check. On a success, the experience is harrowing but survivable, as the Takans' actions and rites have corrupted this area. The journey causes 1 Corruption, and the Jackal has a vision about a great darkness growing in the heart of the Aeco Wood. If they fail the check, the vision is the same, but causes 1d6 Corruption.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

Looking down, you see your body fall to the ground, as your vision opens to the realm of dreams. Your vision ascends out of the warren, soaring over the Aeco Plains until the whole of the southern War Road stretches out beneath you. A voice, soft and light, yet filled with a terrible doom, calls, "Come and see." The voice draws your attention to the green stretch of the Aeco Woods. As you watch, a rot begins to grow from the centre of the wood, spreading out to consume all the forest, and then swiftly on to Densom and Sentem. The voice calls out again: "See and despair, for my hand will not be opposed. Let all who see the black tree answer my call."

4. Ruins

The ruins here are the cellar of a building that once stood above the plains in ages past. All that remains of that building is a series of five rooms and a tunnel, which has collapsed. It is here that the Takan are keeping the youths from the towns. Grethspec and his Mavakan bodyguards also quarter here. Grethspec has interrogated the youths over the past couple of days, and is currently pondering what to do with them.

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Sights – muddy footprints on stone, blood stains, and moss and fungus growing on the walls.

Smells – dry rot, filth, wet fur, and smoke.

Sounds – whimpers and grunts, small screams, and the roar of a fire.

A. Entry Room

The wall to the cellar collapsed here, when the Norakan burrowed out the warren. The Norakan began to store supplies here for the weeks before and after Sentem's raid. The Takan have cast stacks of rotting meat, stolen caravan supplies, and other sundry items around the room.

B. The Holding Pen

Two Mavakan are here, as well as a pack of four Norakan. They have just received new bronze weapons, cast by Taom. The weapons give them +1 to all damage rolls. Once the battle starts, the Jackals must protect the youths. Starting on round 2, two of the Norakan begin to kill the youths, one per round, until they are all dead. Once this starts to happen, the youths begin to scream in earnest.

The Takan are holding the youths in a makeshift pen made from spears placed in the ground. The youths look the worse for wear, and all have small bruises, badly healed cuts, etc. Should the Jackals free them, they inform the Jackals that Taom is missing. The Takan forced him to smith bronze for them.

They can also provide the following information:

- The Takan have been questioning them about the town and Sameel's garrison.
- The Oritakan took Taom as soon as it arrived. They have not seen him since. The Takan took him back through room A.
- Yesterday, a Luathi arrived. They never saw his face, but could hear his voice. He spoke with the Oritakan in its own tongue, and took Taom with him back beyond room A. They have not seen the robed figure again.
- Room C is where the interrogations happen. They swear they did not tell the Takan anything, because they did not know anything.

C. The Interrogation Room

This room is empty save for a door on the opposite wall, a large stained spot in the centre of the floor, and a bronze hook in the ceiling.

D. Forge

The forge is currently quiescent. Taom, chained to the casting box, is sleeping at this point. He is exhausted, physically and spiritually. The Takan have kept him working near ceaselessly, casting and forging weapons for the Takan of Barak Kentak. However, the youth has also forged, in secret, a blade of his own. Taom is the son of Gan, the redsmith of Sentem, and has learned from his father. Using all his skill, his faith in Alwain, and inspiration born of desperation, he forged a Luathi khopesh, which he named Tsadt Hekren. Taom hid it under his sleeping area, buried in the sand.

Treasure: Tsadt Hekren, a Luathi khopesh that grants +10% to Melee Combat and +1d8 damage against Takan.

If the Jackals discover Taom, and can free him from his chains, he will gift the blade to his rescuers. He can tell them that Grethspec spends most of his time in the next room, E. He has heard strange chanting and seen stranger shadows behind the curtain that separates the rooms.

E. Commune Area

The Daughter Beneath the Earth sent Grethspec to oversee the warren. It was Grethspec who brought the sapling of the black tree, and who sees Taom's potential. He has taken a basin of foetid water from the Aeco Woods, and uses it to commune with the Daughter. The Daughter is interested in ensuring that a larger than usual group of Takan survive the annual raid on Bartak Kentak. Grethspec communes often with the Daughter, sending back what it has found out from interrogating the youths. Within the commune area are Grethspec and his personal war band – three Mavakan and five Norakan – who are all marked with the brand of a black tree. The Takan have a 65% chance of noticing any attempt to free Taom. If they do, Grethspec leads the war band on a counterattack against the Jackals. Remember, the Takan all gain +1 damage due to Taom's weapons.

F. The Tunnel

This tunnel runs west for about 12 yards, growing damper as it runs under the river, and then heads north. However, it has recently collapsed under the weight of the river.

AFTERMATH

The Jackals complete their mission when they find the youths and get them out of the warren. It is still a three-day journey back to Sentem, where they might have another encounter that would require them to protect the youths.

Should they return with any or all of the remaining the youths, Ba-en Nafar is surprised and grateful to see the Jackals, but not as happy as the parents. He pays the Jackals for the rescue and the bounty (if they remembered to collect the heads). Gan offers to repair any of their weapons and armour for free. Sari Avi offers them hospitality whenever they find themselves in Densom. Ba-en Nafar also mentions that Sameel has need of capable Jackals, and that perhaps they would like to make more silver (see *Jackals: Fall of the Children of Bronze*).

If they return with news, but the youths have perished, Ba-en is sombre, but appreciates the information nonetheless. The Jackals' reception from the town of Sentem and Densom will not be as warm, and Sari Avi does not forget this.

Either way, the Jackals discovered the Takan are ready for this year's raid. They might also have discovered the return of the Black Tree Tribe, and the existence of a power of Chaos in the Aeco Woods.

Advancements:

- 1 for slaying Grethspec
- 1 for finding the youths
- 1 for preventing Taom's death

Hooks

Ba-en hires the Jackals to clear out the Takan warrens while Sameel raids Bartak Kentak.

THE WOLVES' LAIR

OVERVIEW

The fort of Orsem Yahan sits on the western edge of Ameena Noani's domain. It lies in the shadow of both the Ligna Hualla and the Luasa Desert. Many Luathi, Melkoni, and Trauj caravans pass through the fort's gates. Which is why, when caravans start going missing, the Nawsi of the Orsem gets worried. Nawsi Namar has put the word out that he is looking for Jackals. He believes that Wolves (bandits) are in the hills, and wants the Jackals to root them out and deal with them. However, once on the trail of the Wolves, the Jackals discover something far worse in the area around Orsem Yahan.

In the northern end of Zaharets, within the realm covered in the gazetteer, word travels fast. The call from the orsem reaches the Jackals' ears very quickly. This adventure provides a way for the characters to start making a name for themselves in the north. Namar has plenty of work for trustworthy Jackals, and knows that the Sar of Ameena Noani needs aid, as well. If this adventure goes well for the Jackals, many doors in the north could start to open for them.

Read or paraphrase the following when the group arrives at Orsem Yahan:

You find yourselves in the eastern fort of Orsem Yahan. The tall fort glows like a green flame as it catches the sunlight, an imposing edifice constructed by ancient peoples. As you head up the main path, you catch sight of a small shrine on the road leading up to the fort. At the gates, you see old men and women dealing with the daily orders of business: handling disputes, watching children, telling tales, and dispensing wisdom. When they see you approach, an old woman calls out the question in all their hearts. "Jackals?"

The wise woman, Nami, can point the group in the Namar's general direction.

Nawsi Namar of Yahan has put out the call for Jackals to help deal with additional threats that have arisen in recent months. Slavers, Wolves, and spirits have plagued the people of the fort, and the Nawsi is offering good silver for anyone willing to deal with these threats.

The Jackals can find Namar in an old temple to Alwain in the centre of town. The Kahar moved the altar to a new building, and the old one acts as a citadel within the fort. Namar is an old Luathi soldier with one eye. He needs Jackals out in the field immediately. Wolves have attacked caravans and carried people off into the hills, with the latest the report coming in just this morning. A badly injured woman managed to escape the attack. She is a Trauj scout named Baya, and she is currently with the healers.

Namar knows:

- Generally, where the Wolves attacked the caravan. Somewhere to the east, where the Asa emerges from the Rekiti Vana.
- It was a Luathi caravan headed out into the desert to trade with the clans.
- It is not the first time the Wolves have taken captives: Namar suspects slavers.
- He has a map of the region for the group.
- He is willing to pay the Jackals 40 ss each should they return with the merchants and the caravan goods.

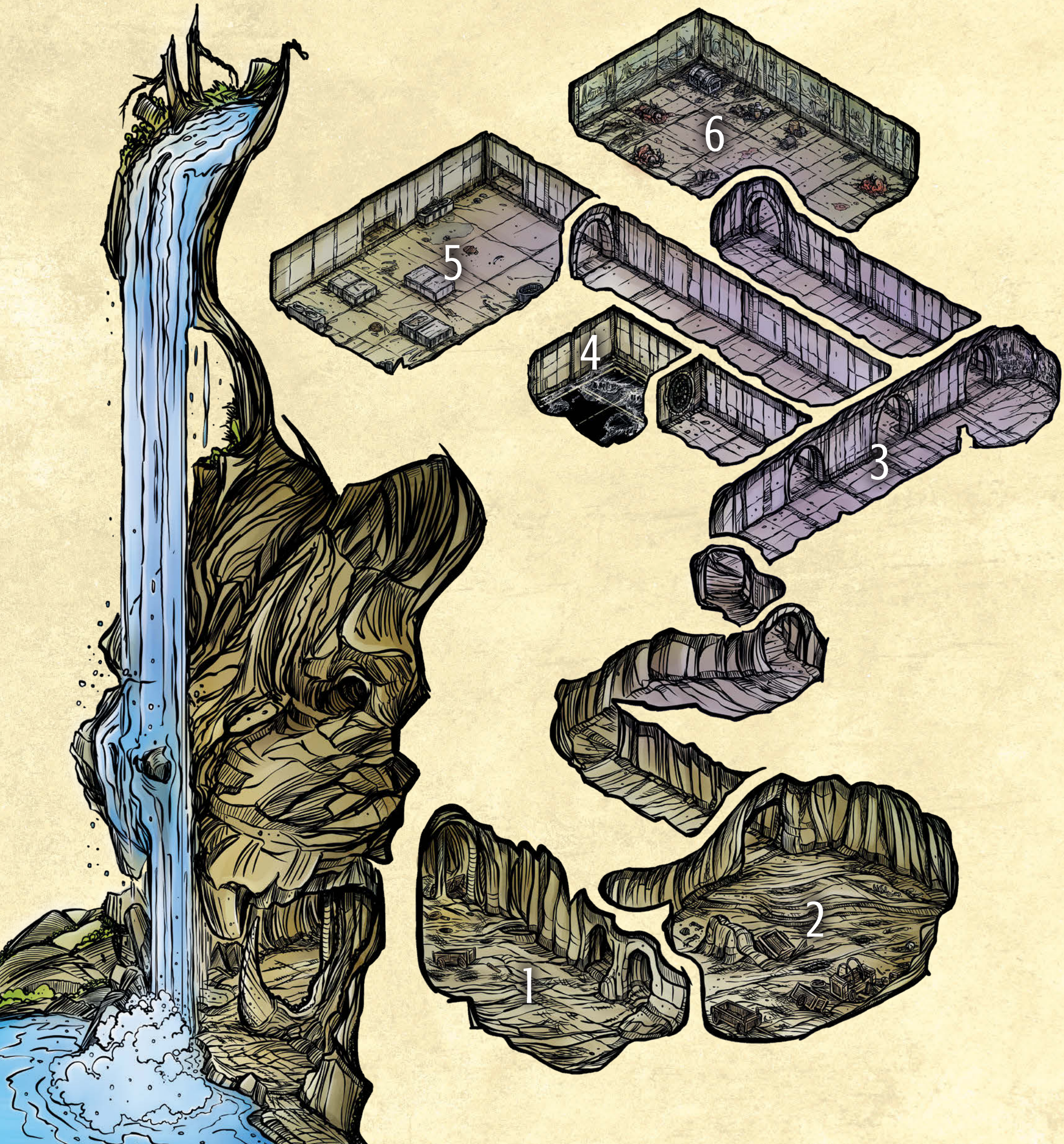
Baya knows:

- The attack was at sunrise two days from the fort.
- It was not Takan.
- They killed half a dozen of the Wolves, but all the guards were slain save for Baya, who suffered a wound that would have killed one of the soft folk.
- They captured the merchants and the goods, and headed north.

LOST CAVES

It is a 2-day trip to the site where the Wolves hit the caravan, which requires only one travel roll. With the map and the information gained from Namar and Baya, the Jackals can find the spot where the Wolves last attacked. From there, it is easy to track the Wolves back to their lair in a cave. A waterfall hides the cave entrance: a successful Perception or Survival check reveals that the waterfall has recently shifted, probably within the past decade or so. It is clear to the Jackals that the ridgeline collapsed, shifting the course of the river.

THE LOST CAVES



1. The Caves

There are obvious signs that someone recently pulled the caravan's wagons into the cave. However, there are no noises of inhabitation or any other indication of where the Wolves might be.

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Sights – rough, water-carved stones, lots of thick webbing along the floors, and the ruts from wagons.

Smells – damp, rot, and smoke. Further back in the caves are the smells of blood and filth.

Sounds – dripping water.

2. The Attack

Eventually, as Jackals explore the cave, they find the wagons. They have been rifled through, and many of the goods they carried are missing. Among the wagons are the bodies of a dozen Wolves. None of the merchants is there.

If the Jackals examine the bodies, read or paraphrase the following:

Something tore the Wolves to pieces by blade and mandible. They have strange black coins in their pouches. All have a serpent tattoo on their chest. The Wolves are not Gerwa, but a mix of Melkoni and Luathi men and women.

Treasure: 45 black (mouahalan) coins

Spider Attack!

Once the Jackals find the wagons, they are set upon by Ankabar in 1d6 rounds. A group of the spiders (number of heroes × 1.5) appears out of disguised holes in the ground and attacks. The Ankabar deposit any Jackals they pull below into the hallways (area 3). Once the Ankabar retreat, or the Jackals dispatch them, the tunnels can provide insight into what happened to the missing gear, Wolves, and merchants.

OLD OUTPOST

3. The Hallways

Tracking the spiders is easy, and soon the characters come to a place where the tunnel shifts from rough-cut passages to worked stone. The façade of the hallways has crumbled under the damp and the mould, but you can clearly see where plaster once clung to the walls. Purple light pulses from up ahead.

The light comes from a large gem set in the hall. The alcove's carvings are remarkably well preserved. They depict folk in strange garb worshipping and sacrificing around the gem, under the watchful eye of a figure wearing priestly robes and a kingly crown.

What a Jackal's senses reveal:

Smells – dry.

Sounds – a low hum and strange scraping noises.

Looking at or approaching within 3 yards of the gem requires a difficult Willpower check:

- Critical: gain 0 Corruption
- Success: gain 1 Corruption
- Failure: gain 1d4 Corruption
- Fumble: gain 1d6 Corruption.

The gem is indestructible by normal means, and possesses a Corruption score of 100. The Touch of Law rite will destroy it.

The Dead patrol these halls – reanimated bodies of those the Wolves have slain. The Wolves dumped the bodies into the mazes, not realising the gem existed or raised the Dead. There are 30 Rapiuma in all: they approach each instance of loud noises in groups of ten.

4. The Visionary

A black metal-bound door seals this small room, which is barred from the inside. If a Jackal breaks down the door (the noise summons the Rapiuma), it opens to a small room, with a map of the War Road on the floor made from strange black metal. It is freezing to the touch (1d4 damage per round, ignores Protection). The markings for holdings do not match any cities the PCs know, save for Orsem Yahan and Ameena Noani. Should the characters bring the information from room 6 back here, it would allow them to look for ancient Mouadah sites.

5. Barracks

These rooms hold stone slabs and basins of water that fill from the walls and drain away. Remnants of old debris fill the rooms. Searching for 10 minutes (summoning the Rapiuma unless very quiet) reveals a small, broken medallion of tarnished silver in the shape of a serpent's head. If the medallion is re-forged and worn, it provides +10% for Willpower and Endurance checks against Corruption, but on a failed check, it increases the Corruption gained by 1. Servants of the Priest-Kings wore these medallions to prevent themselves from falling into madness.

6. The Hall of the Dead

Treasure: 150 ss, three Melkoni long spears (2H) with +5% to hit from fine craftsmanship, and a fine set of leather armour, etched with stories of the feats of Trauj warriors; it provides +5% Athletics when worn.

In the final days of the last apocalypse, an old Mouathenic managed this outpost for his Mouadah masters. He served the Priest-Kings, and the friezes on the walls show the tales of their crusade against the Grand Kingdoms (+5% Ancient Lore for studying these friezes for 10 minutes). It seems they were capturing the Sea Peoples and taking them away in chains for some strange and disturbing experiments and sacrifices.

During the final days of the apocalypse, enemies wounded the Mouathenic, and so he bound his spirit to the walls of this hall in the hope that his masters would send a sacrifice he could possess. The characters are as good a choice as any. There are three members of the caravan here in a deep sleep. There are also three piles of raw and gooey flesh.

Use the stats for the Etemma (see page 201).

AFTERMATH

Once the Jackals slay the Etemma, the adventure comes to a swift end. Any remaining Rapiuma fall apart. Once slain, the Etemma will try to secretly possess one of the merchants' bodies, assuming they are still in the room. If the Jackals removed them, it still has a 45% chance of doing so. Should it succeed, the Jackals will have another enemy to deal with – one who is subtle, clever, and with centuries of practice in torture and dark magics.

Nawsi Namar will recompense the Jackals for their efforts, adding 10 ss if they cleansed the strange building. The people of Orsem Yahan welcome the Jackals, for the time being, and Namar can set them up with lodging for the season, if they desire it.

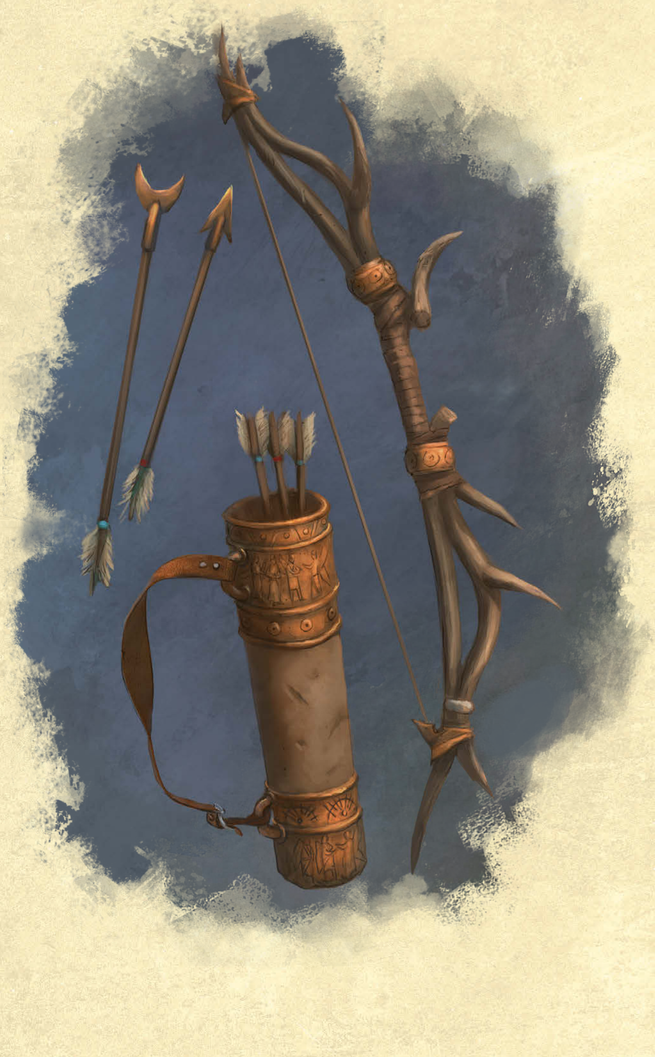
Depending on how the adventure progressed, the Jackals might have a strange map leading to other sites like the one they discovered, as well as a possessed merchant who holds them responsible for its predicament. It may attempt to enlist the Jackals in a long plot to seek out the other sites and try to recover the power it once possessed. But for now, the Wolves no longer threaten Orsem Yahan, and the Jackals' actions bought Namar time to recover.

Advancements:

- 1 for finding the caravan
- 1 for surviving the spiders
- 1 for slaying the Etemma

Hooks

Spirits in the forest have been attacking the woodfolk. Namar wants the Jackals to investigate. And what are those other sites on the map in the ruins?



APPENDIX

CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

Step 1: Concept

Step 2: Choose Culture

Luathi

Skills: Melee Combat +5%, Healing +5%, Survival +10%, Willpower +10%
Virtue: *Bonds of Family, Fires of Freedom,* or *Seeker of Knowledge*

Gerwa

Skills: Deception +5%, Ranged Combat +5%, Healing +10%, Ancient Lore +10%
Virtue: *An Iron-like Will, Follower of the Six and the Eight,* or *Servant of a Rigid Order*

Melkoni

Skills: Melee Combat +5%, Trade+5%, Dodge +10%, Influence +10%
Virtue: *The Unmoved Soul, Bear All Things,* or *The Fires of Life*

Trauj

Skills: Ride +5%, Unarmed Combat +5%, Athletics +10%, Endurance +10%
Virtue: *An Ancient Hate, Hearer of Old Tales,* or *Seeker of Glory*

Step 3: Ritualist

If you are a ritualist: choose a tradition from your culture (below), then gain DEV 9 and four starting rites.

- Luathi: Hasheer or Kahar
- Gerwa: Hekas or Hem-Netjer / Hemet-Netjer
- Melkoni: Rylareia or Warrior of Lykos
- Trauj: Alkitar or Yahtahmi

Step 4: Generate Attributes

Strength, Deftness, Vitality, Courage, Wisdom, Devotion, Corruption

- Spent 17 attribute points
- Attributes start at 9 and can be increased to maximum of 18
- Gain additional points by taking Corruption (max 3) and/or reducing attributes to a minimum of 6. Each point by which you reduce an attribute grants a negative trait
- Devotion starts at 0 if not a ritualist
- Corruption starts at 0

Derived Abilities

Round down in all cases
Initiative: DFT + 1d6
Melee Damage Bonus: see table
Move: 10 + DFT/3 yards
Mettle: (VIT + COU)/2
Wounds: Wounds per row = VIT/2
Clash Points: (DFT + COU)/5
Max Devotion Points: DEV

MELEE DAMAGE BONUS

STR	Damage Dice
1–2	–1d6
3–5	–1d4
6–8	–1d3
9–11	0
12–14	+1d4
15–17	+1d6
18–20	+1d8
21–23	+1d10
24–26	+2d6
27–29	+2d8
30+	+2d10

Step 5: Generate Skills

You may not raise any skill higher than 75% during character creation.

You may exchange points between pools on a 2:1 basis.

STARTING SKILLS	
Common Skills	
[STR + DFT + VIT + COU + WIS] × 3 For non-ritualists, this is 186%	
Craft	15%
Drive	15%
Influence	20%
Perception	35%
Perform	20%
Ride	20%
Sail	10%
Survival	20%
Defensive Skills	
[DFT + VIT + COU] × 2	
Dodge	20%
Endurance	25%
Willpower	25%
Martial Skills	
[STR + COU + DFT] × 2	
Athletics	20%
Melee Combat	25%
Ranged Combat	25%
Unarmed Combat	30%
Knowledge Skills	
[WIS] × 5	*You cannot spend points to increase Ancient Lore
Culture (Own)	35%
Culture (Other)	15%
Healing	20%
Lore	10%
Ancient Lore	0%*
Urban Skills	
[WIS + COU + DFT] × 2	
Deception	15%
Stealth	20%
Thievery	10%
Trade	20%
Magic Skills	
[DEV] × 5	
Each individual rite starts at (DEV + WIS)%	

Step 6: Choose Traits

Choose one general trait and one cultural trait. If non-ritualist, choose two of each, instead.

Step 7: Character Questions

- What caused your character to leave the comfort of the community and strike out as a Jackal?
- What causes your Jackal to hesitate on the War Road?
- Who helped your Jackal begin their journey?
- What is the worst possible fate you see for your character?
- What was the first trial your Jackal encountered on the War Road?
- If your character were to lay down their life for something, what would it be?
- What would cause your character to retire from the life of a Jackal?
- Which is more important to your character, power or wisdom?

Loremaster gives player one active and three passive advancements

Step 8: Select Equipment

- Either
  - Linen or leather armour; ranged weapon; close combat weapon (2H); and dagger, OR
  - Linen or leather armour; shield (or close combat weapon (1H)); ranged weapon; close combat weapon (1H); and dagger
- Backpack, two weeks of provisions, 30 feet of rope, waterskin, five torches
- Ritualist gear, if the character is a ritualist
- 3d6 × 10 shekels

NAME:

CULTURE:

CULTURAL VIRTUE: ○

STR	DFT	VIT	COU	WIS	DEV

	MAX	CURRENT
CLASH POINTS		
METTLE		
VALOUR		

FATE	○ ○ ○ ● ●
DARK FATE	● ● ● ● ●
CORRUPTION	

WOUNDS	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	VALOUR × 3
	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	VALOUR × 2
	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○	VALOUR × 1

COMMON SKILLS

○ CRAFT %

○ DRIVE %

○ INFLUENCE %

○ PERCEPTION %

○ PERFORM %

○ RIDE %

○ SAIL %

○ SURVIVAL %

DEFENSIVE SKILLS

○ DODGE %

○ ENDURANCE %

○ WILLPOWER %

MARTIAL SKILLS

○ ATHLETICS %

○ MELEE COMBAT %

○ RANGED COMBAT %

○ UNARMED COMBAT %

KNOWLEDGE SKILLS

○ CULTURE (OWN) %

○ CULTURE (OTHER) %

○ HEALING %

○ LORE %

ANCIENT LORE %

URBAN SKILLS

○ DECEPTION %

○ STEALTH %

○ THIEVERY %

○ TRADE %

TRAITS AND TALENTS

MAGIC

	MAX	CURRENT
DEVOTION POINTS		

RITE		%	DP	CP	EFFECT
○					
○					
○					
○					
○					

COMBAT

DAMAGE BONUS:

MOVE:

INITIATIVE:

WEAPON	DAMAGE	ARMOUR	PROTECTION

EQUIPMENT

CURRENCY:

ITEM	ENCUMBRANCE
TOTAL:	
FATIGUE PENALTY:	
CLASH POINT PENALTY:	

GLOSSARY

Acalana resin. A resin made from the acalana tree and other herbs. It sears wounds closed and purifies them, a painful but ultimately beneficial treatment.

Alwain. Lord of Light and Law. God of the Luathi. Revealed through the *Shalapher* and through the rites and rituals of the Kahar.

Barak Barad. The former Takan empire in the Zaharets. The Takan reign included the enslavement of the Luathi. See also the *Kingdom of Ignorance*.

Jackals. Adventurers. Jackal is a term that applies to those who go out from the community to slay and scavenge from the dead. While not a part of the community, they fulfil a useful service and are generally tolerated while they perform it.

Hestul. The seastone of the Hulathi. Always smells of the sea and glows with green flame in sunlight

Kalypsis. The Hannic name for the world. Used in the *Shalapher.*

Kiani. The noble line of kings that rules Ger.

Kingdom of Ignorance, the. The name given to the Takan kingdom of Barak Barad in the *Shalapher*. The kingdom enslaved the Luathi, destroyed much of their history, and ruled for many generations of the Luathi. There are those who yet fear the return of Takan bearing the brand of the Red Moon.

Law of Alwain, the. This is the name the Sars of Ameena Noani have given to the dominion of humanity in the Zaharets. It comes from the Book of Beginnings in the *Shalapher*. "And as the Law of Alwain governs the world, so too has he given his children rule over that which dwells in it."

Luasa. The great eastern desert of the Zaharets.

Moons. There are three moons in the night sky over the Zaharets: Oura the silver, Gai the green, and Kauma the red. Each is associated with different blessings, and children born under a full moon are often marked by fate.

Mouadah. People of the Zaharets rarely speak this name, and when they do it is in hushed tones: it is considered ill-luck to say the word out loud. Although the iron gates of this fell city were torn down long ago, its people and their dark arts still cast a pall over the Zaharets. It is said they worshipped all manner of Rathic and other foul things, which now lie beneath the sands and ruins of the Luasa.

Mouli. The Trauj word for evil; also used to speak about all creatures, lore, or magics related to the Serpent's Standard and the East.

Nawsi. Captain.

Rathic. A spirit, most often one opposed to the Law of Alwain.

Ritualist. One who bargains with entities beyond the mortal plains. They invoke rites according to cultural traditions:

> *Alkitar.* Trauj beserkers who bear the blood of giants and whose hatred for the Takan is self-destructive.
>
> *Hasheer.* Luathi loremasters and students of the past, whose knowledge of the Law can affect the world around them.

Hekas. Gerwa alchemists and outcasts from Ger's caste system, their rites invoke sympathetic magic and distillation of the elements of the world.

Hem-Netjer/Hemet-Netjer. Gerwa priestesses and priests of the living gods of Ger, their rites call on their gods to manifest their influence and servents.

Kahar. Luathi priestesses and priests of Alwain, their rites invoke his purity and light.

Mouathenic. Ritualists of any culture that invokes Choatic rites.

Rylareia. Melkoni followers of Ryla, the goddess of passion, are warriors and lovers whose hands can heal and slay in the name of their goddess.

Warriors of Lykos. Melkoni warrior priestesses and priests of the demi-god Lykos, son of Ryla. They emulate the deeds of Lykos to invoke their rites.

Yahtahmi. Trauj storytellers whose story-rites can grant listeners the traits and deeds of the ancestors.

Ryla. The Melkoni goddess of passion. Patron deity of Kroryla.

Sar/Sari. Chief/chieftainess.

Serpent's Standard, the. The ancient battle standard of the kingdom of Mouadah. Used by the learned and the Trauj to refer to anything related to the Takan or Corruption.

Shalapher, the. The holy writings of the Alwainic faith. The Books of the *Shalapher* are Beginnings, Freedoms, and Rites. Each Book chronicles a different part of the revelation of Alwain to the Luathi.

Shumma. The Prophetess of Alwain. Leader of the Uprising. After leading the Luathi to their freedom and penning the *Shalapher*, Shumma called the Luathi south with her. Of all the clans, only three followed her. She, and those who left with her, have not been heard from since.

Six and Eight, The. The dead and living gods of the Gerwa. Gerwa sacrifice to the Six to keep their eyes off the worshipper. They worship the Eight to draw the gods' eyes to the worshipper.

Takan. Takan is the Luathi term for all the degenerate beasts the Priest-Kings of Mouadah bred during the time of darkness before the current age. Since the fall of that foul nation, the Takan tribes have run free. Although the Takan take many forms and shapes, the Luathi classify the most common of the Takan on the basis of the roles they observed during their enslavement by the Kingdom of Ignorance:

Atakan. It is said that all Takan possess a rapacious desire for meat, but the Atakan's lust for flesh is legendary. The Atakan stand nearly as tall as giants, and they crave the flesh of men. Strong enough to rip a horse apart, they are frequently found among the other Takan and are used as enforcers.

Gadakan. Mouadah bred these beasts first, as creatures of burden and labour. They kindled the Gadakan's dim minds with hate and released them into the wild. The Gadakan possess strong regenerative properties, which only Alwain's light – the sun or fire – can prevent.

Mavakan. These were the foot soldiers of Barak Barad. Their simian-like forms provide them with greater strength than the average man, and their cunning is no less fierce.

Norakan. These are the runts of the Takan bloodline. Small and foul, they are the most prevalent of the Takan. They live much of their lives underground, digging tunnels beneath the earth for the rest of the Takan to use.

Oritakan. These were the rulers of Barak Barad. Mouadah filled the hearts of these Takan with a dark and terrible will for domination, and they were the orchestrators of the Kingdom of Ignorance. All Luathi live in fear of the Oritakan, who brutally dominate the memory and history of the Children of Bronze.

Retakan. Massive compared to the Oritakan and the Mavakan, the Retakan are terrors in the dark. They are patient, stealthy, and sly. They remain hidden until they burst forth in an explosion of carnage. Many caravans have fallen to the predations of the Retakan.

Tsutakan. The Luathi refer to these beasts as hunters of men. For every ten men who escaped the lash of Barak Barad, the Tsutakan returned with the bones of nine of them. Tsutakan still roam the plains around settlements of men, seeking small groups to carry off into the night.

Uprising, the. The Uprising is the name the Luathi gave to the war between them and the Takan of Barak Barad. In it, the Luathi won the Zaharets and their freedom. It was by led the prophetess Shumma.

War Road. The stretch of coast in the Zaharets that serves as a broad path connecting many current and former powers.

Wolves. A local term for bandits.

Zaharets. The Land of Risings. All the land between the Vori Wastes and the Plains of Aeco.

GLOSSARY OF GAME TERMS

Advancement, active. Rewards awarded at the end of an adventure that Jackals can spend to increase attributes, skills, and traits.

Advancemet, passive. At the end of each session, Jackals have a chance to increase the skills they used.

Clash. When a Jackal spends a Clash Point, they may react to an enemy attack, turning it into an opposed roll. If they win the opposed roll, they not only parry the attack, but also strike back to damage their foe!

Clash Point. A resource characters (PCs and NPCs) spend to react to enemy attacks, boost their efficacy in combat, and perform minor actions. Clash Points represent battlefield awareness and reflexes.

Critical. In *Jackals*, a critical occurs on any matching die roll (11, 22, 33, etc.) that succeeds.

Cultural Virtue. Once per session, a Jackal can call upon the virtues of their culture to increase the quality of a check by one step (failure to success, success to critical).

d100. The primary die used in *Jackals.*

Devotion Point. A measure of a ritualist's connection to the source of their power. Ritualists spend Devotion Points to power their rituals.

Fate Point. A representation of fate's influence in the Jackal's life. Jackals can spend these for a variety of effects, from re-rolling a skill check to preventing their character from dying at 0 wounds.

Fumble. In Jackals, a fumble occurs on any matching die roll (11, 22, 33, etc.) that fails.

Mettle. A representation of a Jackal's stamina. Most often used in the travel rules. As Mettle is damaged, a character's Valour decreases.

Protection. This value (usually provided by some type of armour) is subtracted from most damage before it is applied to Valour and Wounds.

Talents. Advanced abilities linked to skills. Obtained after a skill increases above 100%.

Traits. Cultural abilities that grant a Jackal an extra 1s die on their skill checks, allowing them to choose the better value for the roll.

Valour. A representation of a Jackal's resolve and endurance in combat. Damage is applied to Valour before Wounds. These represent painful bruises, near misses, and rattling hits. All Valour is recovered if the Jackal can rest between fights.

Wounds. Wounds represent a character's ability to take damage. Damage applied to Wounds represents savage cuts and broken bones. Should a character's Wounds drop to 0, they die (unless they can spend a Clash Point to avoid death).

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